

LIFE INCORPORATED

Written by

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FADE IN:

**EXT. FOREST - MORNING**

We are FLYING high over an endless forest of trees. There are no birds but if there were they'd be singing.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
There's an old joke -- How many psychiatrists does it take to change a light bulb? Just one. But the bulb really has to wanna change.

We spot a small town in the distance and FLY TOWARDS it.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Now think about what you just did. Light bulbs can't actually "want" yet you attributed consciousness anyway, didn't you? You left reality behind to grasp greater meaning.

We see the town is actually a corporate campus surrounded by residential neighborhoods nestled in the middle of nowhere.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
I'm going to ask you to do that again now. On a larger scale.

We ZOOM INTO the campus and its stone buildings. We begin to make out EMPLOYEES crisscrossing the manicured grounds.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
You see, this isn't a regular corporate campus. And these employees? They're not here to design better mousetraps.

Continuing to ZOOM IN, we see that some of the employees are wearing suits, others lab coats, others casual attire.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
They're here to design better mice. And better dolphins. Inside these buildings they create and revise the genetic code for all the mammals of the animal kingdom. You heard correctly -- their actual, original genetic code.

We FIND our hero, EBO TUCK, 28, walking on a path between buildings. He's wearing a runner (messenger) uniform.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 You see, we're not in the real world anymore. We're somewhere else. Somewhere far away.

Ebo climbs the broad stone steps into an impressive building.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 Welcome to the Design Labs of Evolution.

A MAN secretly eyes Ebo as he passes and enters the building.

HOLD ON "Primates" etched above the entrance.

**INT. PRIMATE BUILDING - CONTINUOUS**

Ebo holds his KEY CARD up to a reader at the security checkpoint. It BEEPS approvingly and he continues past into..

**INT. LOBBY - CONTINUOUS**

MANY EMPLOYEES scamper into and out of a half-dozen hallways marked with names like "Tarsiiformes" and "Lemuriformes."

Ebo looks around to get his bearings. He spots the hallway marked "Hominidae" and heads towards it.

**INT. HOMININAE HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER**

Ebo walks past past a POSTER showing a mastodon: "Mammut furlongi -- Coming Soon!"...

..past the offices of "Pan paniscus"...

..and finds his door - Pan troglodytes. He pauses to consider abandoning the mission but gets up his nerve and heads in.

**INT. CHIMPANZEE DEPARTMENT - CONTINUOUS**

A sign reads "Chimpanzee Department". A female RECEPTIONIST, early 20s, sees Ebo's runner uniform.

RECEPTIONIST  
 Someone called in a pickup this early?

EBO

No, no, I'm not on the clock yet. I was hoping to talk to Mr. Jaster.

RECEPTIONIST

(eyeing his uniform)

The Head of the entire Hominids Division? You want to talk to him?

(playing along)

Name?

She picks up the phone and dials an extension.

EBO

See, that's the thing. I don't have an appointment-- Don't call.

RECEPTIONIST

(into phone)

Someone's here for him. A Mister...

Ebo knows this is useless but...

EBO

Ebo. Ebo Tuck.

RECEPTIONIST

Tuck... Okay.

(hanging up)

You don't have an appointment.

EBO

Look, I really need to talk to him. I figured out a way to raise the enzyme levels in chimps--

RECEPTIONIST

Chimpanzees.

EBO

Sorry. The enzyme levels in chimpanzees.

(off her blank stare)

That'd be, like, a huge breakthrough in Simian biology. I don't know if you know this but enzymes play a big role in-- You don't care, do you?

It's clear she doesn't.

Ebo eyes the doorway into the offices area and considers just walking past her.

RECEPTIONIST  
 (knowing)  
 Security'd be on you in 20 seconds.

Ebo is relieved she took that option off the table.

EBO  
 Okay, I'm just gonna ask straight out -- please let me walk around in the hallways back there. If I can just run into Mr. Jaster I can tell him my idea and, once he hears it, he'll WANT to give me an appointment. Pretend I snuck past. I'll take full responsibility.

She yawns.

EBO (CONT'D)  
 What if I take you out to dinner?

RECEPTIONIST  
 You're kidding, right?

EBO  
 Anywhere you want. You know, within reason.

RECEPTIONIST  
 (disgusted)  
 I don't go out with runners!

Ebo didn't see THAT coming.

EBO  
 What, I'm not good enough for YOU?  
 You're just a fuckin' receptionist!

RECEPTIONIST  
 And even I have more power than you.

She goes back to her business, confident in the knowledge that she'll never have to see or hear from Ebo ever again.

CUT TO:

**INT. RUNNER'S ROOM - SHORT TIME LATER**

This is where the approximately 20 runners hang-out between their pickups and deliveries.

There's a coffee machine, lockers, communal tables, bulletin boards and safety posters ("Sloppiness = Cancer").

Above the DISPATCHER'S DESK is a SCHEDULING BOARD displaying each runner's current assignment and also a COMPILE BOARD...

"Next Compile: 1 day 7 hrs 51 mins"

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Mammuthus primigenius (woolly mammoth) = REV 3.43

Pliometanastes protistus (sloth) = REV 5.2

Canis dirus (dire wolf) = REV 6.23

Most of the RUNNERS (all males, early 20s) have already arrived for work including TOM LOGAN, NAGI MORAN, REID KAFFIR, and MITCH TAPPER.

Two DETECTIVES from Security are going through a locker, cataloging and removing the contents. They do not look like they wish to chit-chat.

Ebo enters, disheartened from the receptionist.

EBO

That's Henchy's locker. What's going on?

NAGI

Nobody's saying.

Ebo hangs his company-issued messenger bag on the wall next to some others and approaches the detectives.

EBO

What happened?

DETECTIVE

Is this your business?

EBO

No. I just-- Henchy do something illegal?

The detective stops what's he's doing and looks straight at Ebo. He takes out his note pad.

DETECTIVE

What's your number?

EBO  
 (suddenly concerned)  
 Why do you need my number?

The detective doesn't need Ebo's employee number, he just wants to intimidate him. And it works. Ebo backs away. The detective turns his attention back to dealing with the locker.

They're interrupted by the entrance of CHALLY BYDEL (20). Pretty, smart and cool in that, "I'm out of your league but I'd never actually say that 'cause that'd be rude, but still, let's be honest, I AM out of your league," kinda way.

CHALLY  
 Where would I find Mr. Lampton?

Tom saddles over.

TOM  
 That's his office but he's not in yet. I'm Tom.

NAGI  
 Stand closer. I'm sure she likes your rotted breathe all over her.  
 (to Chally)  
 I'm Nagi.

She smiles hello as the detectives exit with the contents of Henchy's locker.

CHARLES LAMPTON, 45, head of the Runner Department, enters for work. He heads straight to the coffee machine for what will be his first of many cups. His put-upon demeanor is the result of 15 years dealing with the immature runners in this department. Coffee and sarcasm are his only allies.

EBO  
 Mr. Lampton, what happened to Henchy?

Only 30 seconds into his day and already he's being forced to deal with something. He SIGHS and addresses the room...

LAMPTON  
 May I have everyone's best attempt at listening?

The room settles down.

LAMPTON (CONT'D)

Mr. Hench no longer works here.  
That is all I have to say on the  
matter.

Having officially taken care of business, Lampton heads to his office for a well-earned nap.

EBO

What happened?

Lampton stops.

LAMPTON

Mr. Tuck, the phrase, "All I have to say on the matter," encompasses any additional details I might say on the matter.

TOM

Was he arrested?

REID

Yeah, Security wouldn't be all over his locker if he just quit.

Without answering, Lampton starts again to his office, shaking his head in disbelief -- is he speaking a different language?

LAMPTON

(noticing)

You Ms. Bydel?

He gestures for Chally to follow him. Once they're gone...

MITCH

Think she's gonna be a runner?

NAGI

If Henchy's gone they gotta replace him, right? I call dibs.

MITCH

Yeah, you've got a shot.

(as Nagi)

"Follow me. My bed's right down the hall, next to my parents' room."

Everybody LAUGHS.

NAGI  
 (defensive)  
 I only moved back 'cause I'm saving  
 for a house.

REID  
 Must suck not living alone anymore.  
 Now every night you have to put  
 away your train set.

More LAUGHS. Nagi pretends to laugh along to show he's a sport.

Tom points to the scheduling board.

TOM  
 2 bucks says Kaffir's first. Who's  
 in?

Tom is offering up the bet that the Dispatcher is going to assign Reid (Kaffir) first. Some of the guys take the bet.

The Dispatcher, across the room and unaware of the bet, watches as the clock turns 9AM -- time to start the day. He looks at his computer and leans into his microphone...

DISPATCHER  
 (over speaker)  
 Kaffir. Megatherium - Ground sloth.  
 Pick up.

The scheduling board comes to life with Nagi's info.

Tom holds out his hand for bet payouts. The losing runners pay, wondering how Tom's so good at this.

DISPATCHER (O.S.)  
 (over speaker)  
 Topper. Platygonus vetus - Peccary.  
 Drop off.

Lampton's door opens and he reenters with Chally. Seeing Chally, the room settles down.

LAMPTON  
 I have an announcement-- Mr.  
 Kaffir, please take that off your  
 head.

Reid removes a hat he swiped from Nagi's messenger bag.

LAMPTON (CONT'D)  
 We have a new runner -- Chally  
 Bydel. You will treat Ms. Bydel  
 with respect and you will not hide  
 things in her food. Are we clear?

The room MUMBLES agreement.

LAMPTON (CONT'D)  
 (to Chally)  
 Spend the day shadowing...  
 (looking around)  
 ..Mr. Tuck here. The dispatcher  
 will get you a uniform.

Lampton returns to his office and Chally crosses to the  
 dispatcher.

Tom leans in so only Ebo and the guys around can hear...

TOM  
 If you start getting a hard-on,  
 think of your old girlfriends. That  
 always works for us.

The guys LAUGH but Ebo doesn't care. He's got 1st shot at  
 Chally!

**EXT. CAMPUS LAWN - SHORT TIME LATER**

Ebo and Chally (now in uniform with her own messenger bag)  
 walk between buildings. Ebo tries to act nonchalant but his  
 nervousness pokes through.

EBO  
 Job's pretty easy. I mean, duh!  
 Pick up and deliver stuff!

Did he just say "duh"? Where'd that come from? She's gonna  
 think he's retarded!

EBO (CONT'D)  
 Hardest part's remembering which  
 species are where. Each building is  
 a different mammal classification.  
 Sorta. Like, that's the Rodentia  
 Building over there -- Squirrels,  
 mice, chipmunks... But, here's  
 where it's screwed up -- koalas are  
 in there too! Must've run out of  
 space in the Diprotodontian  
 Building, I guess.

Shut up! Is he really sounding like the loser he thinks he is sounding like?

ANGLE ON: A BENCH

A MAN, the same one from the steps, secretly eyes Ebo as they walk past.

**INT. COMPILE BUILDING - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS**

As in all the buildings, there's a SECURITY CHECKPOINT at each entrance. Ebo stays a step behind Chally so he can check out her ass.

EBO  
 (to guard)  
 There's my man. How'z it going today?

The GUARD doesn't respond. If some guy's trying to impress some girl by pretending they're pals, THIS guard's not playing along.

Ebo sees Chally is noticing the empty line next to them.

EBO (CONT'D)  
 Our cards won't work in that line.  
 You were thinking, "Why can't we go in that shorter line?" Am I right?

Chally smiles, amused Ebo's trying so hard to connect.

She reaches over and waves her card in front of the other line's reader.

SFX: BUZZER

CHALLY  
 (to guard)  
 Sorry! I'm new. He didn't warn me not to do that.

The guard gives Ebo a look -- be a better teacher.

Chally smiles at Ebo as they pass through the checkpoint.

SFX: BEEPS

Ebo heads towards the elevators but something attracts Chally's attention. She peels off to check out a large GLASS WALL that looks into the basement below.

VIEW THROUGH GLASS...

**INT. COMPILE ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

This large, busy room is where the DNA code ends up.

Each mammal's revised code, written by thousands of programmers in the different departments, is delivered here on CODING TAPES by the runners. The tapes are loaded into the mainframe at one of workstations by COMPILING TECHNICIANS.

This room is where everybody's hard work comes together -- the final stop before the revised animal code is "shipped."

Think Mission Control at NASA or the broadcast truck at a Super Bowl.

CHALLY

Is it always this busy?

EBO

Tomorrow's a compile night. All the departments are rushing to get their revisions in before the deadline.

Chally looks at the room's COMPILE BOARD (like the one in the Runner's Room.)

CHALLY

The new mastodon's not listed.

EBO

She's not 'til next month.

CHALLY

Those posters are everywhere. Must be a huge revision.

EBO

(agreeing)

You don't throw a black-tie event just to show off a new tail.

(then)

Gotta keep moving. We're on a schedule.

They leave the wall and cross to the elevators. Ebo's again a step behind Chally.

CHALLY

You can just look, by the way.

EBO

What?

CHALLY  
I'm the new girl and I'm pretty. I  
get it. But it's creepy if you keep  
getting behind me to sneak looks.

EBO  
I wasn't sneaking looks!

SFX: DING -- the elevator arrives.

**INT. ELEVATOR - MOMENT'S LATER**

They're alone. Awkward silence until...

EBO  
"I'm pretty"?

CHALLY  
I didn't say better, I said pretty.

CHALLY (CONT'D)  
A lot of guys say I am. If you  
don't think so, that's okay.

Back to awkward silence.

CHALLY (CONT'D)  
If you don't think I'm pretty, why  
you so nervous around me?

EBO  
I'm not nervous.

CHALLY  
You seem nervous.

EBO  
I'm not. I just, you know, never  
trained someone before.

CHALLY  
That must be it.

A few beats.

EBO  
I didn't say you weren't pretty--

CHALLY  
Ha! I win!  
(sing-song)  
*You think I'm pretty, you think I'm  
pretty...*

Chally does a victory dance at Ebo.

CHALLY (CONT'D)  
 Since you were honest, you have  
 permission to look at my ass.

The elevator doors open and she exits.

Ebo lags behind thinking, "How cool is she?"

**INT. EQUUS LAMBEI LAB - SHORT TIME LATER**

Diagrams detailing the insides of Equus lambei (Ice-Horse) fill the walls -- skeletal views, respiratory systems...

8 LAB-COATED PROGRAMMERS are working at their own CODING STATION. This is no sweat-shop. Like all the other departments, this one is filled with highly-trained professionals, each with a deep knowledge of the animal their department is in charge of -- in this case the Ice-Age Horse.

Chally and Ebo wait as a PROGRAMMER takes a CODING TAPE off his workstation (similar to the magnetic tape spools in 1980s recording studios), places it into an empty CODING TAPE SUITCASE, and starts to fill out the paperwork...

EBO  
 (to Chally)  
 I know it's obvious but I'm  
 supposed to be teaching you stuff  
 so...always make sure they put down  
 the time.

CHALLY  
 Gee, I hope I remember. Thankfully  
 there's the word "time" next to the  
 signature field to jog my memory.

She lets out a smile. Ebo sees she "gets it" -- this job's not rocket science.

Suddenly...

DEPARTMENT HEAD  
 No! No, NO!!

The DEPARTMENT HEAD stands over MS. SLOOPE, one of the programmers. The other programmers look up.

DEPARTMENT HEAD (CONT'D)  
 You're coding on top of a segment  
 that wasn't error-checked yet!

MS. SLOOPE  
I was gonna check it--

DEPARTMENT HEAD  
When, AFTER? Suppose the R-Level  
flag got changed? The lower code  
won't be checked!

MS. SLOOPE  
I'll error-check it now--

DEPARTMENT HEAD  
Run a full Zygote sim. Put it on  
the front screen.

She hesitates. She doesn't want her work trashed in front of  
the whole department.

DEPARTMENT HEAD (CONT'D)  
Run it!

She begrudgingly hits a couple of keys. The output from her  
workstation is now on a large screen at the front.

DEPARTMENT HEAD (CONT'D)  
Let's all watch if your gamble to  
save time would've paid off.

ANGLE ON FRONT SCREEN

A high-def SIMULATION of the growth of a horse fetus is seen  
in high-speed and superimposed with technical gibberish.

Over the course of 20 seconds the FETUS starts to grow but  
suddenly becomes misshapen -- something is obviously wrong.  
The fetus struggles and shakes, quickly becoming a grotesque  
creature whose edges turn blacker and blacker until it goes  
still and melts into itself. The fetus "rotted."

Chally almost throws up. Even the experienced programmers  
turn away in disgust.

HEAD  
That's what happens when you take  
shortcuts. Cancer. One undeclared  
array, one misdefined  
variable...and we get an End Of  
Species Notice. If the Ice-Horse  
dies off from a mistake YOU make  
we're ALL of work. Anybody else  
want to take shortcuts?

The camera HOLDS ON the image of the rotted fetus. It slowly  
fades into...

**EXT. CAMPUS LAWN - SHORT TIME LATER**

..a map of the campus.

Chally holds the map as Ebo points to various buildings, explaining where different departments are.

Some EXECs come down the path. Ebo catches the execs checking out Chally after they pass.

Chally lowers the map.

CHALLY

I can't get that simulation out of my mind. That was really disgusting.

EBO

We're not making cupcakes here.

CHALLY

How often does cancer get through?

EBO

You mean gets compiled into an actual animal? Ends up in the wild? By the time the tapes reach the Compile Room they've been screened so many times it's silly.

(then; re: map)

Come on. You have to learn this.

Ebo takes the map from her. He holds it up and points to one of the buildings...

EBO (CONT'D)

Okay. Obviously Lagomorphs are a separate order from Rodentia but they share the same building...

Chally grabs the map from Ebo and playfully runs away.

EBO (CONT'D)

Hey!

Ebo laughs and chases after her...

BEGIN UPBEAT MUSIC

MONTAGE

Scenes of Ebo teaching Chally the ins and outs of a runner.

INT. ARTIODACTYLA BUILDING - EBO AND CHALLY HOLD UP THEIR CARD KEYS TO THE CHECKPOINT READER AND WALK INTO THE LOBBY. CARVED ABOVE THE FIREPLACE ARE THE WORDS: "WELCOME TO ARTIODACTYLA - HOME OF THE HOOF!" EBO POINTS OUT WHERE THE ELEVATORS ARE AND THEY HEAD TOWARDS THEM.

INT. CAMEL LAB - EBO AND CHALLY HAVE DROPPED OFF A PACKAGE. AS THEY WAIT FOR THE PAPERWORK, CHALLY BROWSES THE "CAMELOPS KANSANUS" WALL HANGINGS -- SKELETAL STRUCTURES, RESPIRATORY SYSTEMS, ENGINEERING PHOTOS OF BONE JOINTS...

INT. RUNNER'S ROOM - THEY PICK UP A PACKAGE FROM THE DISPATCHER'S DESK. THE OTHER RUNNERS, JEALOUS THAT EBO GETS TO HANG WITH CHALLY, TAUNT HIM WITH SEXUAL GESTURES BEHIND CHALLY'S BACK.

EXT. CARNIVORA BUILDING LOBBY - ON THE WALL, ETCHED IN MARBLE, IS "ORDER: CARNIVORA". THERE'S A HANDWRITTEN SIGN, "CHIROPTERAIA HAS MOVED TO FLOOR 6." CHALLY LOOKS AT A MAP BUT CAN'T FIND WHERE THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO GO. EBO POINTS OUT THE CORRECT DIRECTION.

INT. MEERKAT LAB - ON THE WALLS ARE DIAGRAMS LABELED "SURICATA SURICATTA". EBO IS LISTENING TO A DULL PROGRAMMER WHILE CHALLY, BEHIND THE PROGRAMMER, PRETENDS TO FALL ASLEEP. Ebo struggles not to laugh.

**INT. ELEVATOR BANK - CHALLY RUNS INTO AN OPEN ELEVATOR AND QUICKLY PUSHES A BUTTON. SECONDS LATER EBO RUNS UP BUT THE ELEVATOR DOORS HAVE CLOSED TOO MUCH TO FIT THROUGH. CHALLY TAUNTS HIM THROUGH THE NARROWING GAP OF THE DOORS. A MOMENT LATER THEY OPEN. SHE ONLY PRESSED THE CLOSE BUTTON. EBO LAUGHS IN DEFEAT.**

**EXT. CAFETERIA BUILDING - AS EBO AND CHALLY WALK THROUGH THE FRONT ENTRANCE...**

A NONDESCRIPT MAN sitting on the grass secretly eyes Ebo. The same man from the bench and the steps.

END MONTAGE

END MUSIC

**INT. CAFETERIA - LUNCH TIME**

The large cafeteria is filled with hundreds of DINERS.

Ebo and Chally enter. This is her first time here so she pauses to take in the scope of the room and how many people must work in all these buildings.

Ebo spots Tom and Mitch walking towards them. He knows they're coming over to flirt with Chally and sabotage any progress he might have made. So...

EBO  
Grab us a place in line. I'll join  
you in a sec.

Chally crosses out. Tom and Mitch are disappointed she crossed out before they got there.

TOM  
She ask for my number?

EBO  
Not yet. So far all she said was  
[sexual moaning sounds.]

MITCH

We tried Henchy's phone. No answer.

EBO

They don't let you keep cell phones in jail.

MITCH

We were hoping the warden would answer so at least we'd find out where he was. Maybe he's not even in jail. Maybe he took off for another campus.

EBO

Why wouldn't they let us know? No, something bad happened that they want kept secret.

Tom has been looking across the room at Chally all this time.

TOM

You might want to teach her the lines.

Ebo puts the COMPILING SUITCASE he's carrying on an empty two-top to hold the table and crosses over.

EBO

Wrong line.

Ebo points to a sign -- "Beverages Only" -- then unhooks a rope so she can exit without going back through the maze.

Chally notices SOMEONE in uniform where they were just at.

CHALLY

Is he at our table?

Ebo turns and sees CAFETERIA SECURITY writing a citation at the table their stuff was holding.

EBO

Whoa, whoa! I'm here!

Ebo rushes back.

CAFETERIA SECURITY

Number?

EBO

I was watching it. I was over there.

CAFETERIA SECURITY  
You abandoned a secure case.

EBO  
I didn't abandon it--

CAFETERIA SECURITY  
Number!

EBO  
(begrudgingly)  
34522. This is bullshit.

The guy stops writing.

CAFETERIA SECURITY  
You questioning the rules?

Ebo immediately knows that was a mistake.

EBO  
(contrite)  
No, sir.

CAFETERIA SECURITY  
Maybe I should also write you up  
for questioning the rules. Should I  
do that?

EBO  
No, sir.

CAFETERIA SECURITY  
(in Ebo's face)  
You're a cog in the wheel. Runner.  
You don't decide what the rules  
are.

The guard stares at Ebo, waiting for him to say something that'd give him another reason to write Ebo up. Once it's clear who's in charge, he hands Ebo the citation and leaves.

Ebo is embarrassed this happened in front of Chally. He crosses to the cafeteria line and grabs a tray from the stack. Chally follows.

They start down the food line.

Ebo grabs a bowl of salad and puts it on his tray.

Chally finally breaks the silence...

CHALLY

He shouldn't have treated you like that. You're not a kid.

EBO

(changing subject)

You forgot your tray.

CHALLY

I don't eat lunch.

He grabs a dish of Mac and Cheese and puts it on his tray.

CHALLY (CONT'D)

(re: citation)

Are those bad? I mean, obviously they're bad but, you know, bad bad?

Ebo shrugs. It's obvious he doesn't want to talk about it.

EBO

(to cafeteria worker)

What's under the parmesan?

CAFETERIA WORKER

Solanum melongena.

EBO

(to Chally)

If I get Mac and Cheese AND Eggplant Parmesan, would you judge me?

CHALLY

Did you get that salad so I'll think you eat healthy?

Ebo nods.

CHALLY (CONT'D)

Then yes, you may use extra cheese to soothe the embarrassment of being chewed out in front of me.

She gestures to the cafeteria worker to give Ebo a serving.

They continue down the line. They're in front of the deserts.

CHALLY (CONT'D)

No. You may not have 2 cheese dishes AND desert.

Ebo can't help but smile -- she knows he's embarrassed and addresses it head on while also making him smile.

If there was any doubt how cool Chally was, it's now been erased.

They reach the CASHIER.

CHALLY (CONT'D)  
The answer's yes, by the way. I'll go out with you tonight.

Ebo is speechless. And surprised.

CHALLY (CONT'D)  
I can tell you wanted to ask me since my fake narcolepsy in Meerkats. I'm gonna make a phone call.

She exits. A moment later Reid walks past and sees Chally walking away from Ebo.

REID  
She didn't wanna eat with ya. Ha ha. Loser.

FADE TO:

**EXT. CAMPUS LAWN - LATER**

Ebo is walking home from work. He exits the campus and crosses the street into...

**EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREETS - CONTINUOUS**

..a residential neighborhood of lower-middle-class houses. Small but well-kept. Think Wilkes-Barre, PA.

Ebo walks past...

..some KIDS playing ball in street...

..a family-owned corner market...

Ebo realizes A MAN is following him. Ebo crosses the street. The man does the same. Ebo becomes nervous -- is he about to be robbed?

The man picks up his pace to narrow the distance between them. We now see it's the NONDESCRIPT MAN who's been spying on him.

This is the RECRUITER.

RECRUITER  
Hello, Ebo. Mind if I walk with  
you?

Ebo keeps walking, his guard up.

EBO  
Do I know you?

RECRUITER  
No. And it's time we met. I want  
you to work for me.

EBO  
I have a job.

RECRUITER  
This would be in addition. It's a  
job changing things. You like to  
change things, don't you, Ebo?

Ebo stops, not sure if he likes this guy.

EBO  
Who are you?

The Recruiter checks that nobody can overhear.

EBO (CONT'D)  
Ooooh, it's a secret.

RECRUITER  
I, and the people I work with,  
insert "tweaks" into the code.

Ebo stares at the stranger for a beat.

EBO  
What is this, a sting?

Ebo abruptly walks away. The Recruiter follows.

RECRUITER  
This is not a sting.

EBO  
Not interested.  
(louder for anybody  
listening in)  
Not interested.

Ebo suddenly stops again. He just realized something...

EBO (CONT'D)

Wait a sec. Henchy was working for you. He got caught and you need to replace him. That's it, isn't it?

The Recruiter doesn't answer. But he doesn't deny it either.

EBO (CONT'D)

I can't believe Henchy would get involved in something like this.

RECRUITER

Yes you can.

EBO

Oh, you know what I believe now? Then you know I believe in staying out of jail.

Ebo starts walking again. The Recruiter follows.

RECRUITER

I know about the bird.

Ebo is surprised he knows about that but keeps walking.

RECRUITER (CONT'D)

A hawk, wasn't it?

EBO

(dumbass)

Falcon.

RECRUITER

Why'd you do it? You changed the specs. You know they're not supposed to be changed? Why'd you do it?

Ebo doesn't answer. He keeps walking.

RECRUITER (CONT'D)

Let me take this one. Because you wanted to make the bird better. And what'd you discover? They're in no hurry to make things better, are they?

Ebo keeps walking.

RECRUITER (CONT'D)

The changes we sneak into the code make animals better. Not little by little--

EBO  
It's illegal.

RECRUITER  
If we don't insert those changes  
who will? We wait for them and  
Evolution will end out of boredom.  
The carnivores didn't get  
stereoscopic vision because it was  
in the plan, you know.

Ebo stops again.

EBO  
(bullshit)  
Stereoscopic vision. That was you?

RECRUITER  
Not just me. I was part of it.

Ebo shakes his head. This guys is so full of shit.

RECRUITER (CONT'D)  
A jump in evolution that forced the  
revision of not just mammals but  
almost every other species as well?  
That didn't come from them and you  
know it. Look at me!

Ebo won't look. Because, truth be told, the Recruiter is  
making a lot of sense.

RECRUITER (CONT'D)  
Intelligent Design doesn't all come  
from the same place. WE'RE the ones  
advancing Evolution. We need a  
runner. Help us.

The Recruiter hands Ebo a piece of paper with a phone number.

RECRUITER (CONT'D)  
We're all scared in the beginning.

EBO  
What makes you so confident I won't  
turn this over to Security?

The Recruiter shows no concern. He turns and walks away.

EBO (CONT'D)  
I'm not changing my mind.

RECRUITER  
 I'm not asking you to. I'm asking  
 you to listen to what's been in  
 there all along.

The Recruiter is gone.

FADE TO:

**INT. BAR - NIGHT**

The atmosphere is casual, the noise level bearable.

Chally spots Ebo at the bar. She comes up as he's sipping a drink. The ice in his glass shifts and he dribbles.

CHALLY  
 Drink much?

Ebo wipes his chin, trying not to look embarrassed.

EBO  
 You look good in regular clothes.

CHALLY  
 Thanks. Imagine me in nice clothes.

EBO  
 Oh no! I didn't mean it like that.

CHALLY  
 You're cute when you're nervous.  
 (mock embarrassment)  
 Oh no! I admitted he was cute.  
 Maybe he'll dribble more and I can  
 take it back.

Ebo doesn't know how to respond so he doesn't. But he heard "cute" and will certainly remember it forever.

They find an open booth and settle in. A passing WAITRESS looks at Chally...

CHALLY (CONT'D)  
 White wine.

The waitress nods and keeps going.

CHALLY (CONT'D)  
 So.

EBO  
 So.

CHALLY  
 (making conversation)  
 How'd you end up a runner?

EBO  
 End up?

CHALLY  
 You know what I mean.

EBO  
 How'd YOU end up one?

CHALLY  
 It's my first job. But you're older. You could've climbed your way to something better. Bad grades, huh?

EBO  
 As a matter of fact, I was in the Vertebrate Program.

CHALLY  
 (bullshit back)  
 I know. I was your teacher. Remember?  
 (off his look)  
 Wait. You're serious.

EBO  
 Full disclosure -- I didn't graduate.

He IS serious. Chally is suddenly impressed.

CHALLY  
 Please don't tell me you're that smart and have been a runner all these years.

EBO  
 Only about this a month. I've had other jobs.

CHALLY  
 How bad'd you screw up to end up back down here?

EBO  
 Do we really have to talk about this?

Chally sees she hit a sore topic.

CHALLY

No. 'Course not.

(sincere)

Sometimes when I tease I get carried away. I didn't mean anything.

Awkward silence. Luckily the waitress arrives with Chally's drink.

FADE TO:

**EXT. STREET - LATER**

Ebo is walking Chally home. Things seem to have turned around and the date is going well.

EBO

Etiquette says to walk on the curb side in case some car hits a puddle. But what if somebody jumps out of the bushes?

CHALLY

Good point.

EBO

Somebody does, you're on your own. Fair warning.

Chally smiles. She's amused by Ebo.

EBO (CONT'D)

So lemme tell you why I didn't finish the Vertebrate Program.

CHALLY

You don't have to.

EBO

No, you're gonna hear it from the other guys anyway. I used to work on the Bird Campus. I was a structural draftsman. Wings mostly.

CHALLY

I heard that Campus is nice. Why'd you quit?

EBO

They fired me.

Here goes...

EBO (CONT'D)  
I changed some specs.

Chally is taken aback.

EBO (CONT'D)  
In my defense, I was dealing with structure. Wasn't like this afternoon. It wouldn't have triggered cancer.

CHALLY  
Why would you change specs?

EBO  
I saw a better way to do something.

Chally just stares. That's the reason?

EBO (CONT'D)  
Know anything about wing structure?

CHALLY  
(no)  
I practically invented it.

EBO  
I was working on the Peregrine Falcon. The joint where the humerus meets the radius and the ulna? I shortened the radius bone and twisted it a third of a degree. That's all I did.

CHALLY  
And you didn't think they'd notice?

EBO  
My change stabilized pressure during lift. It made the bird faster.

CHALLY  
But you knew you'd get in trouble. I mean, you knew that, right?

EBO  
Actually? I thought they'd be grateful.

Chally doesn't know what to think. She's never met someone who thought like this before.

EBO (CONT'D)

Anyway, they fired me it gave me an excuse to move here. See, I've always been interested in the mammal endocrine system--

(nerd check)

Actually, forget about that. That's boring.

(back)

So I moved here and got accepted into the Vertebrate Program and it was all good. And then they found out about the bird thing and the all good went away. They kicked me out. "Not to be trusted." That was a couple of months ago. So here I am.

CHALLY

But a runner?

EBO

I'm banned from all jobs that deal in design now.

CHALLY

There's lots of non-design jobs that pay better.

EBO

True but... This sorta brings us back to that boring endocrine thing I started to say.

(here goes...)

This is gonna sound silly but I worked out this theory on how to control HG in high-level primates -- you know, chimps, orangutans...

(clarifying)

HG stands for--

CHALLY

Growth Hormone.

EBO

Good!

CHALLY

I'm not exactly a scarecrow. What's the theory?

EBO

Without getting technical, it would basically allow hominids -- great apes -- to be stronger and live an extra 20 or 30 years.

Did Chally hear the correctly?

CHALLY

For real? that haven't been able to do that.

EBO

I read a lot of books.

CHALLY

That must be it. The ape guys probably don't read books.

EBO

It's not like it's obvious stuff. I was working on it for years. I could never quite crack it though. And then, a few months ago, I did.

CHALLY

Great timing.

EBO

Right? AFTER I'm banned from working around those who can green-light it.

CHALLY

(realizing)

As a runner you get access to those people again. Smart.

Ebo smiles. She's smart too.

EBO

Turns out they're harder to get to than I thought.

CHALLY

Can't you just mail 'em the idea?

EBO

Tried. It all got returned unopened. I guess I get it. I mean, it's not like a hospital ever got a worthwhile letter -- "Dear Doctors, Here's a better way to do surgery..."

They've reached Chally's apartment building.

CHALLY

This is me. I had a good time.

Ebo is too scared to make the move so Chally leans forward and kisses him on the cheek.

EBO

Okay. I'll, uh, see you tomorrow.

Chally goes inside.

CUT TO:

**INT. CHIMPANZEE DEPARTMENT - MORNING**

To Ebo's delight, a NEW FEMALE RECEPTIONIST (20s) is behind the desk this visit.

EBO

I have a package for Mr. Jaster. I was told to hand it to him in person.

The receptionist looks at Ebo. That isn't standard.

NEW RECEPTIONIST

(realizing)

You're the one who tried to get past Michelle.

Ebo feigns innocence.

NEW RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)

(sure of it)

It was you. You asked her out.

EBO

She told you about that, huh?

NEW RECEPTIONIST

She told everybody about that.

Ebo lets out a small chuckle, thinking how lame he must seem to her. Seeing Ebo admit his lameness, the receptionist chuckles along. They're on the same page now -- both chuckling about how men will stoop to anything.

Ebo tries to use this newfound comradery...

EBO

Michelle-- Was that her name? She did miss a fun evening. You know, I have a couple of tickets to a concert this weekend. I don't suppose you'd like to go--

NEW RECEPTIONIST

(you're pathetic)

Really? Really!

The receptionist shakes her head in disgust. Ebo drops the package on the desk and walks out in shame.

**EXT. CAMPUS LAWN - LATER**

Ebo is walking on a path, carrying a COMPILING TAPE SUITCASE. Chally runs up.

EBO

Hey! I've looking for you.

They walk together.

CHALLY

I had a fun time last night.

EBO

Me too.

CHALLY

Know what I heard? They might be splitting the Hominidae family into more divisions. A Neanderthal version or something.

EBO

I heard that too. It's just a rumor.

CHALLY

The Pleistocene vertebrates are already getting long in the tooth. I mean, they're definitely positioning apes as the new "new." So that got me thinking. If they used your idea in what becomes the new flagship species, no way that wouldn't make you famous.

They've reached the Compile Building. Chally pauses in case Ebo wants to ask her something. But she can't wait forever.

CHALLY (CONT'D)  
 Okay. I'll, uh, catch you later.

Ebo nods. She crosses out as Ebo starts up the steps.

EBO  
 (to himself)  
 "Want to go out again?" How hard is  
 that to say?

**INT. COMPILE ROOM ENTRANCE - SHORT TIME LATER**

Although he went through a checkpoint to get into the building, the Compile Room has the highest level security so there's an additional security checkpoint.

Hanging over the entrance is a COUNTDOWN CLOCK...

"Next Compile: 12 days 2 Hrs 3 mins"

Ebo walks past a GUARD and through the first of a set of SLIDING GLASS DOORS. The doors close behind him. He holds his key card up to the reader inside.

SFX: BEEP

The second set of doors open.

**INT. COMPILE ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Dozens of COMPILING TECHNICIANS are busy at their stations.

Ebo enters and looks for an available workstation. For no particular reason he picks the one manned by MARCO.

MARCO  
 Anything good?  
 (looks at paperwork)  
 Palm Squirrel. Third revision of  
 him I've loaded this week.

Ebo opens his case and Marco loads the tape into his equipment.

MARCO (CONT'D)  
 Let's see what they're doing to  
 this little guy.

The equipment reads the tape's header and fills the screen with complicated gibberish.

MARCO (CONT'D)

(re: screen)

Readjusting pancreatic amylase  
levels again? Those guys in Rodents  
must be bored. Whatever.

Marco flips switches and his workstation starts to import the  
tape into the mainframe. As he fills in paperwork...

EBO

(casually)

You wouldn't happen to have any  
connections in the Ape Department,  
would ya?

MARCO

(sarcastic)

I'm yachting with 'em this weekend.

EBO

You could. It's not impossible.

Marco just keeps filling out the paperwork.

MARCO

Heard one of yours got arrested a  
couple weeks ago?

EBO

Yeah. Nobody knows why.

MARCO

I do.

Ebo's ears perk up.

MARCO (CONT'D)

'Cause he's a stinky little runner.

Marco chuckles at his joke.

Great. Ebo has to take shit from the compile techs now.

MARCO (CONT'D)

I also heard they hired some pretty  
girl to take his place. Send her  
around. I need a vacation from  
looking at Dickweed all day.

Marco gestures towards RON, the technician working at the  
station in front of him.

Ron turns around to protest his new nickname. His chair catches on something, he loses his balance and falls into the back of Marco's station.

RON  
Oh shit!

Marco's workstation goes dead.

MARCO  
What the fuck! You killed my power!

RON  
It was an accident.

MARCO  
You did that on purpose!

RON  
Right. I was able to get my chair caught and fall just right.  
(adding)  
Maybe it's karma for calling me Dickhead.

Marco is pissed. He pulls the tape from his equipment, dumps it back into Ebo's case, takes out a DEMAGNETIZER and passes it over the tape.

MARCO  
I called you Dickweed, not Dickhead, Dickweed.

After a beat Marco looks at Ebo. The tape is demagnetized but Ebo is still standing there.

MARCO (CONT'D)  
What are you waiting for? Go back to Rodents and have 'em run another.

EBO  
Why'd you erase it? You can't use it again?  
(off Marco's look)  
I'm just asking.

MARCO  
(annoyed he has to explain)  
When a compile is stopped, for whatever reason, it invalidates the checksums-- What do you care why?  
(MORE)

MARCO (CONT'D)

The tape's dead. We have to start over.

Ebo grabs the case and heads back to the Rodent Department.

**INT. PRIMATE BUILDING - SHORT TIME LATER**

Ebo is taking a shortcut back to the Rodent Building. As he walks through one of the hallways, an UNMARKED DOOR opens. There's no outside knob. It's an exit-only door from the department on the other side.

A GUY pushing a MAIL CART struggles to get the cart through the heavy, spring-loaded door. Ebo crosses and holds the door open to help.

MAIL CART GUY

Thanks.

(re: this exit)

Saves me from having to go all the way around to the front.

Ebo sees an interoffice address on a package on the cart.

CLOSE ON PACKAGE: "Tyler Renall - Pan troglodyte Division"

EBO

(re: doorway)

This the back exit from the Chimp Department?

The man nods, finishes getting the cart through the door, and heads off.

Ebo, still holding the door open, realizes the fates are on his side today.

**INT. HALLWAY, CHIMPANZEE DEPARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER**

Ebo walks through the hallway, scanning the office doors until he finds the one he's looking for...

CLOSE ON SIGN: "Alexander Jaster, Division Head, Hominids"

Ebo looks in and sees the assistant desk and Jaster's office beyond. Both empty. Maybe the fates aren't on his side today after all.

He starts back down the hallway in frustration.

He passes a BREAK ROOM and inside sees AIDAN, a lab-coated employee reading the newspaper.

**INT. BREAK ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

EBO  
How ya doin? I'm looking for Mr.  
Jaster.

AIDAN  
(not looking up)  
He's out for the next few days.

EBO  
Oh, right. I heard that.

Ebo crosses to the coffee machine and pours himself a cup. He doesn't want one but it gives him time to consider if he really wants to do what he's thinking of doing next. He knows he won't get another chance so he digs deep and turns back around...

EBO (CONT'D)  
You work on apes, right?

Aidan lowers his newspaper. They're IN the Hominids Dept. Who is this guy?

EBO (CONT'D)  
Of course you do. Dumb question. I know this sounds really crazy but I came up with a theory to extend HG by bypassing IGF-1 levels. Can I run it by you?

Aidan rubs his eyes. This guy's a runner.

AIDAN  
You studied endocrine biology?

EBO  
As a matter of fact, I have not.  
Not technically. But I read a lot  
of books on it.

Aidan puts his paper down completely and gives Ebo his full attention. This could be good.

He's gonna listen! Ebo tries not to look too excited.

EBO (CONT'D)  
Okay. I've never actually pitched  
it out loud but here goes.

EBO (CONT'D)

At a certain point, Chimpanzees--  
well, all apes, stop producing GH.  
Now, obviously, as you know, that  
has to do with--

AIDAN

Hold on a sec.  
(calling out)  
Dennis.

Another lab-coated guy, DENNIS, has entered the break room.

AIDAN (CONT'D)

This guy figured out a way to  
extend the expression of GH. Come  
listen.

SAN

(re: uniform)  
You're a runner.

AIDAN

Just sit. Listen.

Dennis sits and looks at Aidan -- Is this a joke?

EBO

So... chimpanzees stop producing  
Growth Hormone because the IGF-1  
signals that trigger it become  
suppressed--

AIDAN

Can you grab me a coffee?

Ebo stops talking.

AIDAN (CONT'D)

Some coffee? Behind you? Just  
black.

Ebo IS closest to the machine and they're nice enough to  
listen so Ebo pours a cup and sets it down in front of Aidan.  
Aidan nods and gestures Ebo to continue.

EBO

Alright... As far as I know, so far  
nobody's found a way to ignore the  
IGF signals. So here's my idea--

AIDAN

Know what'd be great? If you could  
shine my shoes.

Dennis LAUGHS.

AIDAN (CONT'D)

Oh, and blow me.

(to Dennis)

Would you like a blow job too?

Ebo bites his tongue and quickly heads to the exit.

DENNIS

Awwww. Mr. Runner's restructuring  
of a bio-subsystem wasn't taken  
seriously.

**INT. CAFETERIA - LATER**

Ebo is sitting alone, unenthusiastically moving food around his plate with a fork.

CHALLY (O.S.)

Hey.

REVEAL Chally standing next to him with a tray of food. Ebo nods his head to acknowledge her and then goes back to staring into the abyss of his mashed potatoes.

CHALLY

I'm excited to see you too.

She takes the seat across from him.

EBO

(re: tray)

I thought you didn't eat lunch.

She takes the plate off her tray and puts it in front of Ebo. She then reaches across with her fork as if she's eating off of Ebo's plates.

Rather than ask Ebo why he's in a funk, she simply eats. He'll open up when he's ready. Sure enough...

EBO (CONT'D)

I tried to tell my idea to some of  
the ape guys.

CHALLY

(excited)

And?

VOICE (O.S.)

Hey, Chally.

It's LEONARD, one of the runners.

LEONARD

Oh. Hey, Tuck. Didn't see you there.

CHALLY

What's up, Leonard?

Leonard smiles -- she remembered his name!

LEONARD

I was just wondering if you're gonna go to the Mastodon Premiere. All the runners are invited and you're new so I thought, you know, if you need a ride or something...

Chally smiles. She's touched.

CHALLY

Are you asking me to go with you?

Leonard tries not to shake.

LEONARD

I guess. You know, if you want to.

CHALLY

(letting him down easy)  
I don't think I'm gonna go.

LEONARD

That's cool. I'm not sure I'm going either. Okay, so...see you anyway-- I mean see you.

Leonard exits to find a place to masturbate himself to sleep.

EBO

You're not gonna go?

CHALLY

Don't change the subject. Did the Ape Guys like your idea?

EBO

They wouldn't even listen. They told me to fetch 'em coffee.

Ebo goes back to moving his food and wallowing in self-pity.

CHALLY

Their opinion doesn't matter  
though, right? I mean, it's the  
head guy you have to convince.

EBO

I can't get to him.

CHALLY

What about asking Lampton to help?  
Department heads probably all know  
each other.

EBO

Lampton's a dick. He won't help.

CHALLY

Even dicks want to be heroes.

EBO

Okay, I have no idea what that  
means.

CHALLY

Maybe he's only an asshole 'cause  
he deals with runners. He never  
gets a chance to mentor anyone.

She goes back to eating. Ebo wants to hate the idea but  
realizes Chally might be right.

EBO

You're good.

CHALLY

I want you to succeed.

EBO

Really?

Chally can hear in Ebo's voice that nobody has ever said that  
to him before. She looks up and stares directly into Ebo's  
eyes to affirm that she meant it.

It's a magic moment -- him looking into the eyes of the  
coolest girl in the world and her letting him.

But moments are ephemeral...

EBO (CONT'D)

He won't do it. And he'll be pissed  
I asked.

CHALLY  
 You're probably right.  
 (then)  
 I thought you wanted this.

EBO  
 I do.

Chally shrugs -- okay. Whatever.

EBO (CONT'D)  
 I do.

CHALLY  
 Sounds to me like you're more  
 afraid of losing.

EBO  
 I'm not afraid.

She goes back to eating from Ebo's plate. After a beat...

CHALLY  
 By the way? Waita ruin a moment.

**INT. LAMPTON'S OFFICE - LATER**

Lampton is behind his desk reading a report. Ebo sticks his head in the door and KNOCKS.

EBO  
 Am I bothering you?

Lampton lowers his report with a SIGH.

EBO (CONT'D)  
 I'll come back--

LAMPTON  
 Damage is done, Mr. Tuck. Returning  
 later will annoy me a second time.

Ebo enters sheepishly.

EBO  
 Uh... Tembi's the one stealing  
 office supplies. I thought you  
 should know.

Lampton looks at Ebo for a long beat.

LAMPTON

There's something you want and you're hoping by giving up Mr. Wanco I'll be more open to it. Not my first time at the poker table, Mr. Tuck. State your request.

EBO

Well, you see, sir, I have this theory to evolve the Simian endocrine system--

LAMPTON

What? You're a runner, Mr. Tuck. You do not evolve endocrine systems.

EBO

With respect, sir, I think I can. But I can't get Mr. Jaster to read my proposal. He's the head of the Hominid Division--

LAMPTON

I know who he is! Is this why you tipped the Dispatcher to get a run to that department?

How'd he know that? Can anybody around here keep a secret?

EBO

I'm sure he'd read it if it was submitted through you. I'm not asking you to back the theory. You don't even have to understand it-- You would! I mean, of course you would. I didn't mean it like that--

LAMPTON

(annoyed)  
Stop talking! I'll do it. Fine.

Did he just get what he wanted?

EBO

Really? Thank you, sir. Thank you so much.

Ebo puts a folder down on Lampton's desk.

LAMPTON

What's this?

EBO  
The proposal.

LAMPTON  
I'm not gonna read that pile of  
rambling excrement. Rewrite it. One  
page.

EBO  
I don't know if I can. It's sorta  
complicated--

LAMPTON  
Everything can be condensed, Mr  
Tuck. I'm not passing along  
something I haven't read and I'm  
not reading that.

EBO  
I'll have it for you tomorrow. And  
thank you again, sir. I really--

LAMPTON  
Out!

Ebo heads to the door, trying not to skip as he exits.

**EXT. RUNNER'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Tom and another runner, DALE have been watching the  
scheduling board, waiting for the next run to be posted.

DISPATCHER (O.S.)  
(over speaker)  
Romder. Paraceratherium - Hornless  
rhinoceros. Pickup.

DALE  
Ha! Pay up.

TOM  
Double or nothing says Nagi is  
next.

Dale looks around. There's at least 10 runners in the room.

DALE  
10 to 1 odds? I'll take that.

Ebo excitedly exits Lampton's office and sees Chally talking  
to Reid. He can't hear them but clearly Reid is disappointed  
as he crosses out.

Chally sees Ebo has returned and crosses over.

EBO  
(re: Reid)  
What was that about?

CHALLY  
Mastodon stuff. What'd Lampton say?

EBO  
(re: Reid)  
He asked you to go to the premiere?

CHALLY  
And I told him I'm not going with  
him. Tell me what Lampton said.

Ebo accepts that the subject has changed, allowing him to get back to being excited.

EBO  
He's gonna do it!!

CHALLY  
Yes!

DISPATCHER (O.S.)  
Moran. Smilodon gracilis - saber-  
toothed cat. Pickup.

Tom holds his hand out. Dales pays, wondering how Tom always seems to guess right. Nagi gets up and heads to the Dispatcher.

EBO  
He wants me to condense it into one  
page. Thank you sooo much for this.

DISPATCHER  
Bydel. Artiodactyla - Even-toed  
Ungulates. Pickup.

Chally waits a beat in case Ebo wants to ask anything. Nothing comes so Chally crosses out.

In the BG: Tom stealthily hands the Dispatcher some money -- his half of the bet's take.

CUT TO:

**EXT. EBO'S LIVING ROOM - THAT NIGHT**

Small, almost dorm-like. But clean. Ebo is at the table, working on his laptop.

SFX: Doorbell

Ebo wasn't expecting company. He opens the door and finds Chally there.

EBO

Hey!

CHALLY

Thought I'd pop by. See how you're doing with the proposal. I'm not interrupting, am I?

EBO

No, no. I'm glad you came. I was gonna invite you. I don't why I didn't.

Beat.

CHALLY

Invite me in.

EBO

Right! Come in.

Chally enters and checks out his apartment.

CHALLY

You're tidy. You're constantly surprising me.

EBO

It's hard to be messy when you don't have lots of stuff. There's nothing to be laying around.

Ebo isn't sure what to do. He's not used to playing host to girls at his apartment.

CHALLY

(hint; whispering)  
Offer me a beer.

EBO

Wanna a beer?

CHALLY

No thanks. I'll have a vodka.

Ebo crosses to the area that passes for the kitchen as Chally continues to check out his place.

**INT. EBO'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

Ebo finds a bottle of vodka and a glass. He makes sure Chally isn't looking and wipes the glass clean with his shirt.

EBO

What do you want in it?

CHALLY

Tonic if you have.

EBO

(don't be silly)

If I have?

(to himself)

Do I have?

Ebo looks in the cabinets and finds some tonic. Unseen by Chally, he throws his arm up in a silent victory punch.

He then gets some ice and pours vodka into the glass. Then tonic. But the tonic is flat.

He SHAKES the tonic bottle to try to get the bottles "excited" but it doesn't work. So he pours some soda water into the mix.

He considers the night's circumstance's and pours in more vodka.

Again he makes sure she's not looking, takes a swig from the bottle and returns to the living room area.

**INT. EBO'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

CHALLY

You're not gonna have one?

EBO

I've only got one glass and I don't think you wanna see me drinking from a salad bowl.

(then)

You said I surprise you. When else?

Chally takes a sip of the drink.

CHALLY

Like this. I assumed you knew a vodka tonic has some tonic in it.

EBO

Too strong?

Ebo reaches to take back the drink but she pulls it away.

CHALLY

You calling me a girl?  
(spotting laptop)  
Is that it?

EBO

Yeah. It was hard condensing it down so much but I think it still reads okay.

She crosses over and starts to read the computer screen. After she reads for a few beats...

EBO (CONT'D)

It's still sorta rough.

CHALLY

Sshhh.

It's gonna take her a few minutes to finish so Ebo crosses back to the kitchen to get some snacks.

He returns with a bag of chips and eats a few while watching her read. She hears the crunching and, without moving her eyes from the screen, holds out her hand. Ebo gives her a few chips and she eats them, all the time reading.

EBO

What part are you on?

CHALLY

Sshh!

After a few beats she's finished.

CHALLY (CONT'D)

Didn't understand a word. I think you spelled endocrine wrong.

Ebo looks.

EBO

It's spelled right.

CHALLY

Then I have nothing to offer.

She gets up and walks to the window to check out the view.

CHALLY (CONT'D)

What are you gonna wear next week  
to the Mastodon Premiere?

EBO

A rented tux. Why?

CHALLY

Just curious. Wouldn't matter  
anyway. Nothing clashes with a  
black dress.

EBO

I thought you weren't going.

CHALLY

I never said that.

EBO

You did. To Leonard. And then Reid.

CHALLY

I told 'em I wasn't going with  
them. Them. Hear the clue?

Ebo is pretty sure he does.

EBO

Would, uh.. You like to go with me?

CHALLY

Thank you! Yes. You're gonna have  
to step up the proactive thing if  
this is gonna work with us.

Did Ebo hear, "Work with us"? He takes her drink and takes a  
swig.

EBO

Would you, uh, like a tour of the  
estate?

CHALLY

Yes please.

EBO

This is the hallway.

Her attention is hijacked by a wall of books at the end of the hallway. She goes to check it out. So much for the tour.

Ebo downs the rest of the drink.

**INT. EBO'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Bookshelves take up the whole wall.

CHALLY

You weren't kidding about the books.

EBO

And they all deal with hormones. Guess it's kinda a weird hobby, huh?

CHALLY

Don't guess.

EBO

I read a book about 'em when I was a kid. Who knows why? It interested me so much I started reading more. And the more I read the more I became fascinated. The other kids started making fun of me 'cause instead of playing sports I was reading these all day. They thought I was a loser. A big, boring loser.

Ebo stares at all his books and his past comes flooding back.

EBO (CONT'D)

I promised myself I was going to become the smartest person in the

EBO (CONT'D)

world on this subject. I was gonna show them! Man, I hated those kids--

(refocusing)

Sorry.

CHALLY

It's okay.

EBO

(re: hormones)

They really are fascinating. The speed at which an endocrine system communicates...

Ebo senses Chally is right behind him now. He turns and sure enough she is, looking at him.

EBO (CONT'D)  
See, like right now. Look how fast  
our hormones are traveling.

Ebo kisses her.

The kissing grows more passionate.

As much as Ebo is enjoying kissing her, he's enjoying more the thought that, for the first time in his life, he actually pulled off saying something cool.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

**INT. EBO'S BEDROOM - 2AM**

The room is lit by moonlight. Ebo is in bed. He opens his eyes and sees Chally getting dressed.

EBO  
Where you going?

She speaks softly so as not to wake him completely.

CHALLY  
If I stayed we'd go to work  
together but we'd have to enter the  
building at different times so  
people didn't think we, you know,  
did this. One of us standing around  
in the parking lot... That's gonna  
feel awkward. I don't want our  
first night to contain an awkward  
memory. Go back to sleep and dream  
I didn't leave.

She kisses him and quietly leaves.

CUT TO:

**INT. RUNNERS ROOM - WEEKS LATER**

Some of the runners are PLAYING POKER.

Chally is reading the paper at one of the tables. Ebo sits nearby, reviewing his one-page proposal for the 100th time.

EBO

Damn. I just noticed something.  
 (flip-flopping)  
 It probably doesn't matter. I don't  
 know, maybe I should tell them.

CHALLY

Stop driving yourself crazy.

DISPATCHER (O.S.)

(thru speaker)  
 Bydel. Drop off - Panthera leo  
 spelaea -- Cave Lion.

Chally stands up and grabs her messenger bag. As she gets up to walk towards the Dispatcher, she and Ebo stealthily touch hands in lieu of an overt show of affection.

Mitch saw it, subtle as it may have been. He throws in his bad cards and leaves the poker game to take a seat near Ebo.

MITCH

Chally going with you tonight?  
 (off Ebo's look)  
 We all know. You guys don't have to  
 keep hiding it.

DISPATCHER (O.S.)

(thru speaker)  
 Tapper. Package out. Ovis  
 canadensis - Bighorn sheep.

MITCH

We all envy you. Runners don't  
 normally get pity fucks from girls  
 like her.

EBO

This going anywhere?

MITCH

She's gonna dump you soon There.  
 That's where it's going.

EBO

That's so nice of you to warn me.

MITCH

I'm not saying it to be nice.

EBO

Really? It came across so nice.

MITCH

I'm warning you 'cause when it happens you're gonna bitch and moan that you didn't see it coming and we're all gonna have to listen to it.

EBO

So this is from ALL the guys. I see. Tell everyone thanks.

MITCH

You really think you have something going with her, don't ya? Tuck, she's meeting programmers now. Heads of departments. Why would she settle for you? I'm sure it was good ride but just be ready. Rides end.

Mitch gets up and starts to walk away.

EBO

You guys are assuming I'll always be here at the bottom.

Mitch turns back.

MITCH

Oh, we didn't realize you're no longer blacklisted. Our mistake.

DISPATCHER

(calling out)

Tapper! You on this run or not?

Mitch gestures to the Dispatcher. He looks back at Ebo and points to his watch.

MITCH

Tick-tock, tick-tock.

Mitch crosses to the dispatch desk and picks up his package.

**INT. LAMPTON'S OFFICE - SHORT TIME LATER**

Lampton's office door is open. Ebo sticks his head in and sees Lampton at his desk taking a cat-nap.

EBO

Uh-hum.

Lampton opens his eyes.

LAMPTON

(annoyed)

Do you know why that door opens,  
Mr. Tuck? Because it has hinges.  
And the only reason that particular  
door HAS hinges is because they're  
required by law.

Ebo tries to understand the point.

LAMPTON (CONT'D)

(impatient)

What?

EBO

I noticed an assumption was  
confusing so I called over to the  
Ape Department--

LAMPTON

What are you talking about?

EBO

My proposal? They claimed they  
never got it.

LAMPTON

Oh, right, right. I sent it to the  
Mouse Division.

EBO

But it was for the apes--

Lampton lets out a SIGH which makes Ebo shut up.

LAMPTON

Which bio system is closest to  
hominids?

EBO

The mouse but--

LAMPTON

The mouse. Correct. And if the  
Mouse Department declares your  
proposal isn't a total  
embarrassment I've instructed them  
to pass it along to the apes.

LAMPTON (CONT'D)

(before Ebo can speak)

Now I believe we've spent enough  
time on this. Close the door on  
your way out.

Lampton goes back to reading. Ebo exits.

FADE TO:

**EXT. CAMPUS EVENT BUILDING PATIO - EVENING**

A banner reads "Mammut furlongi - The NEW Mastodon!"

A thousand BLACK TIE ATTENDEES mingle in a huge patio. There's a flowing fountain, strands of hanging lights, ice sculptures, hors d'oeuvre tables, champagne being passed out by WAITERS...

It's a gala affair -- scientific conference meets the Oscars.

Chally and Ebo arrive in a taxi. Chally looks stunning. People sneak peeks as they walk past -- the women wishing they were as beautiful as Chally in her black dress, the men wishing they were as lucky as Ebo in his rented tux.

CHALLY

I have to track down a john. I'll find you inside.

Chally heads off towards the building.

Ebo heads into the crowd to get the attention of one of the WAITERS handing out champagne.

As he passes through he overhears TWO GUYS who are scanning the crowd.

GUY 1

There's Hontros. Too bad we don't have guns. Susan would pay big money if we took out her boss.

GUY 2

The Mouse Department can't be as bad as she says.

EBO

Excuse me. Hontros, the Head of the Mouse Department? Which one is he?

They clam up, scared they were caught speaking ill of someone.

EBO (CONT'D)

It's cool. Would I be his friend if I don't know what he looks like?

Guy 1 begrudgingly points to a guy across the patio and they quickly cross out in case Ebo really is gonna rat them out.

Ebo takes 2 flutes from a passing CHAMPAGNE WAITER and starts towards Hontros.

A PASSERBY bumps into Ebo, almost spilling the drinks.

PASSERSBY

Oh! I am so sorry!

Luckily Ebo moved quick enough to save the drinks. He looks to find Hontros again but he's vanished into the crowd.

FADE TO:

**INT. EVENT BUILDING - SHORT TIME LATER**

A large ORCHESTRA plays.

Inside is even more grand than outside -- there's red carpets, chandeliers, overflowing flower arrangements...

BANNERS hang from the ceiling -- "Re-balanced Hindquarter"; "Low Abrasion Tusks"... On the longest wall spans a timeline illustrating the evolution of the mastodon family.

A huge MECHANICAL MASTODON slowly rotates on a platform. Lit by spotlights, parts of the torso open via mechanical arms displaying the reworked wonders inside.

Ebo enters and quickly spots some runners. He crosses to join them.

TOM

(re: Ebo in tux)

Hey look, they revised the penguin again.

Some of the runners LAUGH but the dig rolls off Ebo. They're passing around a FLASK. Ebo takes a swig and spots Chally talking to a GOOD-LOOKING GUY.

She LAUGHS at something he said.

Reid enters with a YOUNG WOMAN.

REID

(proudly)

This is Nes. My date.

Chally looks over and notices Ebo has returned. She excuses herself from her conversation, crosses back to the runner group and takes the champagne Ebo brought her.

EBO  
Who was that?

CHALLY  
Some programmer. I think he deals with the wolf oratory system.

EBO  
You're not sure?

CHALLY  
He does. Don't worry, he didn't invite me to the Mastodon Premiere.

Chally fits her arm into Ebo's elbow to confirm she's with HIM. Ebo is surprised at her willingness to show affection in front of other runners.

Reid's pride drops a notch -- Nes is good but Chally on your arm? Ebo wins.

Mitch isn't as impressed -- he catches Ebo's glance and points to his watch ("Tick-tock, tick-tock.")

Ebo suddenly spots HONTROS.

EBO  
I'll be right back.

He dashes off before Chally can say anything.

ANGLE ON: EBO PUSHING THROUGH CROWD

EBO (CONT'D)  
Mr. Hontros?

Hontros stops.

EBO (CONT'D)  
I'm Ebo. You were sent my proposal last week--

HONTROS  
I'm sorry. Who are you?

EBO  
Ebo Tuck. The proposal Mr. Lampton sent over? I noticed a mistake and wanted to clarify one of the assumptions--

HONTROS

Slow down. Now there's two people I don't know. Who's Mr. Lampton?

EBO

The head of the Runner Department.

HONTROS

Oh, Charley! He sent me something?

EBO

A proposal.

(off his confused look)

On ape endocrine production? You run the Mouse Division, right?

HONTROS

Yes.

EBO

Mr. Lampton didn't send something over?

HONTROS

If anything was sent I would've seen it. I haven't spoken to Charley in weeks. Now if you'll excuse me, I really have to get back.

Hontros crosses out.

The orchestra strikes up INTRO MUSIC and the LIGHTS lower. A SPOTLIGHT hits the stage at the base of the mastodon model and A SPEAKER appears.

SPEAKER

(into microphone)

Good evening. Welcome to the unveiling of Mammut furlogi! The new mastodon!

The crowd APPLAUDS.

Ebo makes his way back to Chally and the runners. She takes his hand -- isn't this exciting! Ebo's thoughts are far away.

SPEAKER (CONT'D)

I won't bore you by listing all the breakthroughs Ms. Studder and Mr. Mung addressed in this revision...

(listing anyway)

Decreased need for structural carbohydrates!

The audience APPLAUDS.

SPEAKER (CONT'D)  
 Hemoglobin specifically formulated  
 for oxygen delivery in cold  
 temperatures... Redesigned teeth  
 for better tundra mastication...

With each "breakthrough" the applause gets bigger. He gestures to the mastodon model looming above him.

SPEAKER (CONT'D)  
 (milking it)  
 Am I imagining things or is this  
 baby built to be around a long  
 time!

The audience cheers, swept up in the all the excitement.

Chally looks to see if Ebo is enjoying it as much as she is. Ebo smiles, pretending he is, but his mind is racing with other thoughts.

FADE TO:

**EXT. EVENT BUILDING PATIO - LATER**

The presentation has ended. The crowd flows out of the building.

CHALLY  
 How can you be so jaded?

EBO  
 I WAS impressed! I was. Look.

Ebo puts on a fake grin then spots Lampton and his wife.

EBO (CONT'D)  
 My turn to pee. I'll meet you by  
 the cabs.

Ebo heads off to the rest rooms. When he's far enough away, he turns back to see if Chally is looking. She's not, so he changes directions and heads towards Lampton and his wife.

EBO (CONT'D)  
 Mr. Lampton!

LAMPTON  
 Mr. Tuck, what a pleasant surprise.  
 You're not bothering us at all.

EBO  
What happened to my proposal?

LAMPTON  
Here? At an event? Very well. Your  
idea won't work.

EBO  
What?

LAMPTON  
I spoke with the head of the Mouse  
Division--

EBO  
You spoke to Honchos? When?

LAMPTON  
(correcting him)  
Mister Hontros. This afternoon. I'm  
terribly sorry. We tried. Now, if  
there's nothing else, I'd like to  
spend the rest of my life alone  
with my wife.

He exits with his wife.

Ebo stands there, frozen.

CRANE SHOT: We are looking down on Ebo, standing still and  
alone in a sea of moving people.

**EXT. TAXI LINE - MOMENTS LATER**

On the side of the building hang two large photo banners, one  
of STUDDER and the other of MUNG, the two responsible for  
tonight's mastodon breakthroughs.

Chally waits in the taxi line, looking up at the banners. Ebo  
crosses in.

CHALLY  
(re: banners)  
It's gonna be you up there one day.

Ebo watches her admire the banners. He gets a burning feeling  
in his stomach and decides not to share what just happened.  
At least not here, under banners of successful people.

**INT. EBO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Ebo is awake, looking at Chally asleep next to him. She is so beautiful.

He looks around his room -- cheap furniture, no art on the walls... This is all he has to show for his life?

He looks again at Chally and then at the clock...

CLOSE ON: TICKING SECOND HAND

Ebo gets out of bed and exits to the kitchen.

**INT. EBO'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

Ebo opens a drawer, finds a PIECE OF PAPER with a number on it. He dials the phone...

RECRUITER (O.S.)  
(thru phone speaker)  
Hello?

EBO  
Let's talk.

SLOW FADE TO:

**EXT. CAMPUS LAWN - DAY**

Ebo sits on a bench along one of the paths. PEOPLE walk by in all directions. A WOMAN walks past...

WOMAN  
(sotto)  
Follow me. Not too close.

Ebo realizes she was his contact. He follows her.

**EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - SHORT TIME LATER**

They have walked into another one of the residential neighborhoods that surround the campus. The houses here are a bit nicer than Ebo's neighborhood. But not by much.

They approach a house that doesn't stand out -- could be any house on any street.

**EXT. SIDE OF HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER**

They walk around to a side door. She KNOCKS.

A slot opens in the door and a PAIR OF EYES look out.

A DEAD BOLT unlocks, the door opens and Ebo follows her inside.

**INT. RECRUITER'S HOUSE/OFFICES - CONTINUOUS**

The offices are in the living room of a house. The place is not well-appointed. The walls are bare, phone wires and computer cords are draped between rooms... The place screams it could be abandoned on short notice.

EBO

I love what you guys have done with the place.

The woman ignores the comment and points to a desk on the other side of the room where the Recruiter is sitting.

Ebo walks past 3 or 4 PROGRAMMERS at workstations (all 30s), reaches the Recruiter's desk and sits.

EBO (CONT'D)

How'd you get coding stations?

The Recruiter puts down what he was reading and looks at Ebo, not answering his question.

RECRUITER

Here's how it works. You keep doing what you do and every so often someone will make contact and tell you where to find the tape we doctored. You'll switch that tape for the one in your suitcase and delivery it to the Compile Room. That's it.

EBO

How often?

RECRUITER

6 to 10 a month. Depends on which animals are being compiled that month.

(re: programmers)

(MORE)

RECRUITER (CONT'D)

These guys are fast but we're not gonna release code before we're sure it's gonna work.

EBO

What do I get in return.

The Recruiter chuckles.

RECRUITER

The satisfaction of knowing you're nudging evolution forward.

The Recruiter holds out his hand to shake and make things official.

EBO

I have a condition. You have to insert an idea I have into the next revision of the chimpanzee.

The programmers look up.

RECRUITER

Come again?

Ebo takes out his proposal and places it on the desk.

EBO

I figured out a way to allow the extension of Growth Hormone in the chimpanzee.

PROGRAMMER

Know what we need? A way to make the bison smell like daisies. Have anything for that?

The employees LAUGH. Ebo ignores the comment. The programmer, who is named GREG, grabs the paper and looks at it.

EBO

Your guys'll have to figure out how to actually code it. I'm not a programmer--

GREG

(re: paper)

You want to block GH secretion? Somatostatin is a paracrine inhibitor.

EBO

Finish reading. Maybe you'll learn something.

GREG

I have four doctorates in cellular patheo-linier biology. Four. Not one. Four. You want to compare dicks? I tinker with the biological structure of proteins you probably can't even pronounce.

RECRUITER

(to Greg)

I got this!

Greg goes back to eyeing the proposal.

RECRUITER (CONT'D)

Look, this isn't Coder Fantasy Camp. We're not throwing shit at the wall here--

GREG

Whoa...

The Recruiter looks up. Greg is suddenly impressed with what he's reading.

GREG (CONT'D)

This is novel shit.

(looking up)

It never occurred to us to try this.

RECRUITER

Will it work?

GREG

I don't know. Maybe. Probably. We'd have to figure out how to actually suppress the IGF signals...

(looking at Recruiter)

This could be a game changer.

Greg walks off with Ebo's proposal to consider it more fully. Manners aren't his strong suit.

The Recruiter considers this new situation.

Ebo doesn't say anything. The less he says after that endorsement, the more powerful his negotiating position.

After some long beats...

RECRUITER  
Have you shown that to anyone else?

EBO  
My boss, some of the ape guys--

RECRUITER  
Walk with me.

**EXT. BACKYARD - MOMENTS LATER**

RECRUITER  
If we use your idea, assuming it can work, you'd have to leave.

EBO  
In the club 5 minutes, already I'm kicked out?

RECRUITER  
I mean leave here. Forever. We'd relocate to another campus. Give you a new identity.

Ebo looks at him. Is he serious?

EBO  
I don't want to leave.

RECRUITER  
You already left a trail. The morning after the compile, you're as good as in jail.

EBO  
(realizing)  
That's why nobody can track down Henchy, isn't it? He's been relocated.

The Recruiter doesn't say anything.

EBO (CONT'D)  
You don't share a lot.

RECRUITER  
Your details will go to my grave as well.

EBO  
So I give you my idea and I run away. That's your offer?

RECRUITER

There's a big upside. You'll have a new identity. You'll be able to work in design again.

EBO

(glass half empty)  
But not on mammals.

The recruiter gives a combination nod and shrug -- That's correct. Not mammals.

EBO (CONT'D)

And if the chimps become the new flagship species I won't be able to bask in any of the credit.

RECRUITER

Not outwardly, no. Are you doing this for you or are you doing this to make animals better?

The Recruiter sees that Ebo is torn -- he didn't come here expecting to have to make a decision of this magnitude.

RECRUITER (CONT'D)

Look, I don't need your answer yet.

RECRUITER (CONT'D)

My guys have to figure out if it can even be coded. You have time to decide.

EBO

How long?

RECRUITER

Two weeks? Six months? Depends on them.

EBO

Could I bring someone with me?

RECRUITER

Sure. But let's not get ahead of ourselves. Whatever your answer's gonna be though, you have to start delivering tapes for us now.

The Recruiter holds out his hand to seal the deal.

Ebo considers everything one last time and shakes his hand.

FADE TO:

**INT. CAFETERIA - DAY**

It's busy. The middle of the lunch rush.

Ebo and Chally make their way down the line. Only Ebo has a tray in front of him. They reach the entrees.

CLOSE ON LABELS: "Gallus domesticus (chicken)" and "Paguristes frontalis (crab)"

CHALLY  
Get the chicken.

EBO  
Order a serving if you want some.

CHALLY  
I don't eat lunch. I'll have some of yours.

Ebo nods to the CAFETERIA WORKER. She scoops him a portion.

CHALLY (CONT'D)  
I'm kinda hungry.

Ebo signals the cafeteria worker for more.

The cafeteria worker is looking directly at Ebo. Is she trying to communicate? Ebo keeps looking back and her expression changes to puzzlement.

False alarm. They continue down the line.

CHALLY (CONT'D)  
You okay?

EBO  
Fine.

**INT. DINING AREA - MOMENTS LATER**

Ebo and Chally find a table as TERRY (early 20s), a hurried busboy is cleaning nearby.

TERRY  
Chally?

Chally sees Terry and jumps up, hugging him.

CHALLY

Terry! I didn't know you worked here. Ebo, this is Terry. Terry, Ebo. We used to be...you know.

SUPERVISOR (O.S.)

Terry!!

Terry waves to his supervisor -- Got it! Back to work.

TERRY

I'm soooo behind. We'll catch up on a day it's not so busy.

Terry quickly crosses out to clear more tables. She reaches over and takes a folk of food from Ebo's plate.

CHALLY

Busing tables now. Dodged THAT bullet.

EBO

(casually)

Ever think about leaving here? Just packing it all up and moving to some other campus far away?

CHALLY

Not really.

She takes another bite of Ebo's food.

CHALLY (CONT'D)

I thought you liked working on mammals.

EBO

I do. I just... Sometimes I think about leaving.

CHALLY

Early retirement? Mouse guys give you good news?

EBO

Not yet.

**INT. COMPILE BUILDING ENTRANCE - DAY**

Ebo, carrying a COMPILING TAPE SUITCASE, stands in line to go through the checkpoint when...

A GUY holding a MAP of the campus gets his attention.

MAP GUY

Excuse me. Can you help?

Ebo, annoyed he's gonna be asked for directions when the guy could just as easily ask the guard, looks at the map.

MAP GUY (CONT'D)

I'm trying to find this location.

(leaning in; sotto)

Behind this building, north corner  
in the bushes under a grey tarp.  
Deliver to Wilton.

(loud again)

Oh, I'm in the wrong building?  
Thanks.

The guy crosses out. Ebo suddenly becomes nervous -- it's showtime.

**EXT. COMPILE BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER**

Ebo finds the building's north corner. He makes sure nobody is watching and looks around in the bushes. Sure enough, there's a grey tarp.

Again checking that nobody is watching, Ebo moves behind the bushes and lifts the tarp -- underneath is a brown bag with a COMPILING TAPE inside.

Ebo opens his compiling suitcase and switches the tapes, all while crouched down behind the bushes. He puts the tarp back over the original tape and leaves.

**INT. COMPILE ROOM CHECKPOINT - SHORT TIME LATER**

Ebo walks past the GUARD and through the first set of sliding doors. He tries not to look nervous which makes him look nervous.

He holds his key card up to the reader but his hand shakes and he drops it. He picks it up and tries again.

SFX: BEEP

The second set of doors open and Ebo walks through. The guard sees that Ebo is acting suspiciously but write it off -- Ebo probably just had too much coffee.

**INT. COMPILE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Ebo scans the nameplates and discovers that the workstation manned by WILTON is busy.

COMPILE TECHNCIAN  
I can take you.

EBO  
Oh. Uh, you know what? I'm gonna wait for Wilton.

A few beats later Wilton's station becomes available.

EBO (CONT'D)  
You Wilton?

Wilton gives a look -- that's what the nameplate says, doesn't it? Why are the runners so stupid?

Wilton loads Ebo's tape into his workstation.

WILTON  
Mammuthus primigenius. More adjustments to the woolly Mammoth. Boorring.  
(then, noticing)  
Huh.

EBO  
Something wrong?

WILTON  
(re: code onscreen)  
They've totally redone her sebaceous glands. I didn't know there was a problem with 'em.

WILTON (CONT'D)  
(then; over it)  
When are they gonna come out with a Cottonly Mammoth? That's what I want to know. Get it?

Ebo is too nervous right now to appreciate any jokes. Wilton signs the paperwork and hands it back.

EBO  
So.. We're done?

WILTON  
Unless you want a bedtime story.

Ebo puts the paperwork into his messenger bag and heads to the door. A smile creeps onto his face. He delivered the tape successfully!

MUSIC STARTS

MONTAGE

INT. SHORT-FACED BEAR DEPARTMENT - DIAGRAMS OF THE BEAR'S ARTERY AND RESPIRATORY SYSTEMS FILL THE WALLS. EBO PICKS UP A COMPILING TAPE FROM A PROGRAMMER AND PUTS IT IN HIS SUITCASE.

EXT. BACK OF COMPILE BUILDING - EBO SECRETLY TRADES OUT HIS COMPILING TAPE FOR THE "TWEAKED" ONE IN THE BUSHES.

INT. COMPILE ROOM ENTRANCE - EBO GOES THROUGH THE SECURITY DOORS WITH HIS COMPILING TAPE SUITCASE.

INT. COMPILE ROOM - EBO DROPS OFF THE "TWEAKED" TAPE TO WILTON'S STATION. WILTON SHOWS NO ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THAT ANYTHING IS WEIRD. DOES HE EVEN KNOW?

EXT. POND (WEEK LATER) - EBO AND CHALLY ARE HAVING A PICNIC. THEY'RE LAUGHING AS THEY POINT OUT FUNNY-LOOKING EMPLOYEES AS THEY WALK BY IN THE DISTANCE. CHALLY PASSES EBO A NOTE. IT'S A SMILEY FACE.

INT. COMPILE ROOM - EBO DROPS OFF ANOTHER COMPILING TAPE TO WILTON'S STATION.

INT. EBO'S BEDROOM - CHALLY AND EBO SLEEP NEXT TO EACH OTHER.

INT. RUNNER'S ROOM (WEEK LATER) - CHALLY IS PLAYING POKER WITH SOME RUNNERS. SHE'S ONE OF THE GANG NOW. CHALLY LAUGHS AT SOMETHING SOMEONE SAYS. MITCH CATCHES EBO'S EYE FROM ACROSS THE ROOM -- "TICK-TOCK, TICK-TOCK..." EBO USES BOTH

HANDS TO MAKE A SCREW-YOU GESTURE.

INT. PORCUPINE DIVISION - DIAGRAMS OF THE PORCUPINE FILL THE WALLS. EBO WAITS WHILE A PROGRAMMER FINISHES THE PAPERWORK.

EXT. BACK OF COMPILE BUILDING - EBO SWITCHES OUT ANOTHER TWEAKED TAPE.

INT. COMPILE ROOM - EBO DROPS OFF YET ANOTHER COMPILING TAPE TO AN UNINTERESTED WILTON.

INT. RUNNER'S ROOM - A RUNNER'S MEETING IS IN PROGRESS. LAMPTON IS TALKING WHILE ALL THE RUNNERS PRETEND TO BE INTERESTED. CHALLY CATCHES EBO'S ATTENTION AND PRETENDS TO FALL ASLEEP WHICH MAKES EBO LAUGH, ALMOST GETTING HIM IN TROUBLE.

END MONTAGE

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

MUSIC ENDS

Chally is in a booth as Ebo brings over drinks from the bar.

CHALLY  
An umbrella! Fancy.

EBO  
Wouldn't want your knuckles getting wet if it rains. Cheers.

They clink glasses to toast. They seem very comfortable with each other now. Like a couple.

CHALLY  
(making conversation)  
So what's happening with the mouse  
guys?

EBO  
I didn't tell you?

CHALLY  
Uh...obviously not.

EBO  
They found some problem. It can  
probably be solved but they don't  
have a time frame.

CHALLY  
Guess you're not as smart as you  
thought you were, Mr. Wall Of  
Books.

Ebo doesn't laugh. Or even smile.

CHALLY (CONT'D)  
I'm teasing. You know that, right?

EBO  
Would it be a big deal to you if  
they can't make it work?

CHALLY  
Of course. It's a big deal to you.

EBO  
So you care about it only 'cause I  
care about it? That's the only  
reason?

Chally looks at Ebo. She realizes what's going on...

CHALLY  
You mean if you're not gonna be  
famous will I keep going out with  
you?

EBO  
I didn't mean it like that.

CHALLY  
Yes you did.

Chally gets up and comes around and sits next to him.

CHALLY (CONT'D)

I like you. I'm not gonna use the other L word yet because that might freak us both out. You know..  
Lesbian.

Ebo wants to smile but holds it in because he wants to keep talking about this.

CHALLY (CONT'D)

Wow. We're serious here.  
(sincere)  
Ebo, you don't have to prove anything more to me.

EBO

More?

Chally thinks how to say it.

CHALLY

I tease you a lot. And you don't like it, do you?

EBO

I could probably live without it.

CHALLY

How come you don't tell me to stop?

EBO

I don't know. It's kinda who you are.

CHALLY

And you don't want to hurt my feelings, right?

Ebo nods.

CHALLY (CONT'D)

In the beginning you didn't tell me to stop but I expected that 'cause, you know, you were trying to get in my pants. But even now you don't say anything. That says a lot.

EBO

I'm a floor mat?

CHALLY

And that you're a guy who puts MY feelings before yours. What girl wouldn't want that?

EBO  
You said "and." I AM a floor mat  
then?

CHALLY  
And that makes me a better person.

EBO  
Just kill me.

CHALLY  
No, listen. Until you came along,  
if a guy got annoyed by my teasing  
I'd just say, "That's who I am.  
Deal with it."

EBO  
You say that to me too.

CHALLY  
Right. But you ARE dealing with it  
and it's not working. I'm still  
causing you pain.

EBO  
So how's that--

CHALLY  
Let me finish! I'm not with you  
because I'm hoping you turn into  
someone else. I'm with you because  
I like the way you are, blemishes  
and all--

EBO  
What blemishes?

CHALLY  
Not finished! You make me want to  
change myself into someone who  
doesn't cause pain. No one else has  
ever done that.

Ebo thinks about the convoluted way she got to that and about how pretty she looks and how he's always wanted somebody like her to say something like that and what comes out is...

EBO  
You're nuts.

Chally knows he meant that in an endearing way. She playfully pretends to be frustrated...

CHALLY  
Okay, let's start over...

Ebo leans in and kisses her passionately. She likes it but breaks away to add...

CHALLY (CONT'D)  
I asked you out before you told me about your idea, by the way.

EBO  
Waita ruin a moment.

**EXT. CAMPUS LAWN - DAY**

Ebo comes out of a building, on a delivery run.

The Recruiter spots him, catches up and walks beside him.

RECRUITER  
What do mean you quit?

EBO  
I see you got the message.

RECRUITER  
You can't quit. We need you right now.

The Recruiter grabs Ebo's arm, causing him to stop walking.

RECRUITER (CONT'D)  
Talk to me.

EBO  
There's nothing to talk about. I said I'd help in exchange for coding my idea. I no longer want my idea coded. I'm done.

RECRUITER  
You need to reconsider. Your idea's a breakthrough--

EBO  
You still haven't figured out if it can even be coded! Look, when I came to you I had this..need. But now I don't have to prove my worth to everybody anymore--  
(firm)  
I've made my decision.

The Recruiter can see he's not gonna change Ebo's mind.

RECRUITER

There's only 4 or 5 tapes before  
the next compile. At least deliver  
those.

Ebo considers this a decent compromise.

EBO

Then I'm done.

RECRUITER

(agreeing)

Then you're done.

**INT. EBO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Ebo and Chally are in bed. They just finished having sex.

CHALLY

5 straight nights. Is this your  
record?

EBO

That's kinda personal.

CHALLY

You were just inside my who-who for  
the fifth night in a row. I'm  
allowed to get personal.

EBO

Who-who?

CHALLY

My Cave Of Wonders? What should I  
call it?

Ebo decides not to pick a name.

EBO

What color should we paint this  
room?

CHALLY

We?

EBO

I think you should have a say. And  
maybe, you know, your own drawer.  
Or something.

Chally smiles the biggest smile we've seen yet.

EBO (CONT'D)  
 (back-pedaling)  
 I didn't say move in. Just a  
 drawer.

CHALLY  
 You did it! You took charge. I  
 didn't have to drop clues all day!  
 Of course, I'm sure my Cave Of  
 Wonders helped a little but--

EBO  
 You know what, go back to "who-  
 who."

She cuddles up next to him and puts her head on his chest.

CHALLY  
 I accept your offer of two drawers.

Ebo puts his arm around her. Life is good.

EBO  
 By the way? It's not gonna happen.

CHALLY  
 What if we share the second drawer?

EBO  
 No. I mean my idea. The hormone  
 thing.

CHALLY  
 I'm sorry. Mice said it wouldn't  
 work?

EBO  
 Still want the drawer? It's a  
 pretty good out if you want one.

CHALLY  
 You always gonna be this insecure?

EBO  
 Hey, I just gave up one of my  
 drawers!

CHALLY  
 Two.

EBO  
Whatever. I think I've done pretty  
well tonight in the growing up  
department.

CHALLY  
Yes you have.

They start making out.

CHALLY (CONT'D)  
(sneaking it in as they  
make out)  
Cave Of Wonders. Said it.

FADE TO:

**INT. RUNNER'S ROOM - AFTERNOON**

Ebo returns from a messenger run.

NAGI  
Lampton's looking for ya.

Ebo heads to Lampton's office, concerned.

**INT. LAMPTON'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER**

Ebo sticks his head in.

EBO  
You wanted to see me?

Ebo enters and sees MR. HARLOFECK, dressed in a dark suit.

LAMPTON  
Mr. Harlofeck here is with  
Security.

HARLOFECK  
Take a seat, Mr...  
(looking at notes)  
Tuck. 34522.

EBO  
Is this about the office supplies?  
Tempi's the one you guys should  
question--

HARLOFECK  
Tell me about the Apes?

Ebo looks at him for clarification.

HARLOFECK (CONT'D)

Their receptionist reported you attempted to gain unauthorized access to the Hominid back offices.

EBO

That was, like, a month ago. It was a misunderstanding. She liked me but I said I wasn't interested and she threatened to make up a whole story to get me in trouble--

HARLOFECK

According to Mr. Lampton, you've been seeking to contact...

(checks notes)

..A Mr. Jaster to give him a paper of some sort. Is that correct?

EBO

A proposal.

HARLOFECK

I'd like a copy. Within the hour.

EBO

It's at home.

HARLOFECK

Mr. Lampton will excuse you from work so you can retrieve it.

EBO

Am I in trouble? I don't know what I supposedly did.

Harlofeck takes out a book of print-outs.

HARLOFECK

During the past 3 weeks the checkpoint logs show significant lapses between when you exit a building and when you deliver to the Compile Room. Care to comment?

Ebo is getting real nervous at this point. Harlofeck looks directly at Ebo. Ebo forces himself to not look away for fear he'll appear guilty.

EBO

I walk slow? I don't know. I guess I go to the bathroom a lot--

HARLOFECK

I'm not making you nervous, am I?

EBO

Yeah, I nervous! You think I'm involved in something. What do you think I did?

HARLOFECK

You can go.

EBO

That's it?

HARLOFECK

I expect that proposal within the hour.

**INT. RUNNER'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Ebo exits Lampton's office. He finds an out-of-the-way spot, covertly takes out his cell phone and dials. His fingers shake from nervousness.

OPERATOR (O.S.)

(thru phone speaker)

The number you have dialed has been disconnected...

**EXT. CAMPUS LAWN - SHORT TIME LATER**

Ebo walks across campus on his way home to retrieve the proposal. His mind is spinning when he sees the Recruiter walking towards him.

EBO

I just tried calling you!  
Security's onto me!

RECRUITER

Calm down. It doesn't matter--

EBO

What do you mean it doesn't matter--

RECRUITER

We're leaving tonight.

EBO

Wait, you're abandoning me!

RECRUITER

You're leaving too. We all are.

Ebo freezes.

RECRUITER (CONT'D)

Tonight's compile is so huge they'll come searching like never before. When they dissect the code they'll put two and two together. You'll be the first person they'll come for.

EBO

Why would I be the first?

Ebo immediately realizes what that means. His eyes go wide in disbelief.

RECRUITER

Your idea's a game-changer. We couldn't just toss it aside--

EBO

No! I didn't agree to let you actually insert it. I didn't pull the trigger--

RECRUITER

Be ready to leave at 5.

The Recruiter starts to leave. Ebo grabs his arm.

EBO

I didn't agree to this! I don't want to leave!!

The Recruiter pulls away.

RECRUITER

It's done. You stay here, you go to jail.

The Recruiter is gone.

Ebo stands paralyzed, trying to come to grips with this.

CUT TO:

**INT. COMPILE BUILDING LOBBY - SHORT TIME LATER**

Chally and some OTHER PEOPLE wait for the elevator.

Ebo comes rushing over. He's clearly very nervous.

CHALLY  
What's wrong?

Ebo pulls her aside to talk in private. They're in front of the GLASS WALL that looks onto the Compile Room.

He doesn't know where to begin...

CHALLY (CONT'D)  
What happened?

EBO  
I have to leave. This evening.

CHALLY  
Where you going?

EBO  
I don't know. Far. I want you to come with me.

CHALLY  
What are you talking about?

Ebo swallows hard. Chally sees he's struggling and scared.

CHALLY (CONT'D)  
It's okay. Tell me.

EBO  
I.. I did a bad thing-- I didn't know it was bad, I mean I did-- They tricked me--

Ebo suddenly freezes. His eyes widen as he looks through the glass at the COMPILE BOARD below.

EBO (CONT'D)  
It's not on there.

ANGLE ON: COMPILE BOARD.

We quickly swish between CLOSE UP SHOTS of animals on the board: WOOLLY RHINOCEROS (swish to) MOUNTAIN BEAVER (swish to) GROUND SLOTH...

EBO (CONT'D)  
(horrified)  
It's not on there! No, no...

Ebo breaks away from Chally and rushes towards the exit.

CHALLY

Ebo!

CUT TO:

**EXT. SIDE OF RECRUITER'S HOUSE - SHORT TIME LATER**

Ebo runs up to the side door. He's huffing and puffing because he ran all the way there.

He BANGS on the door but doesn't wait for an answer before BANGING again.

The Recruiter finally opens the door.

EBO

Which animal is it? Which one!

RECRUITER

Keep your voice down!

The Recruiter pulls Ebo inside.

**INT. RECRUITER'S HOUSE/OFFICES - CONTINUOUS**

The workstations are unplugged, the wires on the walls have been removed, open packing boxes are scattered around the floor... It's obvious they're moving.

None of this distracts Ebo's focus...

EBO

The chimp's not being compiled tonight! Which animal has my code! Which one! TELL ME!!

RECRUITER

All of 'em.

Ebo freezes. He can't process that.

EBO

(in shock)

There's 20 animals being compiled tonight.

RECRUITER

23. The 19 that are high-level vertebrates will all be getting your code.

EBO  
 (horrified)  
 What have you done?

RECRUITER  
 Attached jumper cables to the balls  
 of Evolution. That's what we've  
 done.

Ebo starts shaking his head.

EBO  
 No, no... This isn't happening. You  
 gotta stop it.  
 (panicking)  
 You still have the original tapes.  
 The compile's not 'til 6. You can  
 import 'em back in. There's still  
 time--

The Recruiter grabs Ebo and shakes him back to reality.

RECRUITER  
 Ebo! It's done.

EBO  
 Why? Why'd you do this?

RECRUITER  
 We can only sneak in a given piece  
 of code once. When my guys were  
 coding your idea they realized the  
 primate hormonal structure is  
 remarkably standard across  
 different species. Tonight's  
 compile is the largest in years. We  
 decided to go for broke while we  
 have the change.

Ebo keeps shaking his head.

EBO  
 Those animals aren't the same as  
 the chimp.

RECRUITER  
 They're close enough.

EBO  
 No! There are differences! You know  
 that. There's no way you had time  
 to debug that code for 19 different  
 species! You're gonna cause cancer!

RECRUITER  
Cost of doing business.

Ebo can't believe he just heard that.

EBO  
I gotta throw up.

Ebo heads down the hall to the bathroom.

Greg crosses in.

GREG  
He gonna be a problem?

The recruiter isn't sure. He changes the subject...

RECRUITER  
What'd they say?

GREG  
We're down to two locations. They think the Aquatics Campus might be the safer bet. And it's further away too, which is good.

The Recruiter nods and gestures to hold any new thoughts for a second. He calls over one of the PAINTERS.

RECRUITER  
(to Painter)  
I want the back rooms painted also. I'm sure there's fingerprints there too.

The painter nods and crosses out. The Recruiter returns his attention to Greg.

RECRUITER (CONT'D)  
Aquatics, huh? Gonna miss working on mammals?

GREG  
Legs, fins...it's all the fucking same after a while.

RECRUITER  
Yeah but it's a mammal's world now. Odds are the fish won't be taking point again soon.

GREG

Give us the word and we'll evolve  
the Goldfish to eat chimps. Don't  
think we won't.

Ebo crosses back, headed for the front door. He looks like a  
man who has accepted his fate. He doesn't like it but has  
accepted it..

RECRUITER

How you doin'?

EBO

I just needed to splash some water  
on my face.

RECRUITER

(fatherly)

This is a big play for us. I didn't  
tell you 'cause I couldn't risk you  
not delivering the rest of the  
tapes. You understand, right?

Ebo nods.

RECRUITER (CONT'D)

Cheer up. By morning we'll all be  
hundreds of miles away and you'll  
be a folk hero. More famous than  
you ever dreamed.

Ebo nods again and continues towards the exit.

RECRUITER (CONT'D)

Someone'll pick you up in an hour.

**EXT. RECRUITER'S HOUSE/OFFICES - MOMENTS LATER**

Ebo walks down the street away from the house.

When he's far enough away, he starts to run back towards the  
campus, his messenger bag on his shoulders.

CUT TO:

**EXT. COMPILE BUILDING - SHORT TIME LATER**

Ebo runs up the stone steps to the entrance.

**INT. COMPILE BUILDING - MAIN ENTRANCE**

Ebo enters and looks up at the clock...

CLOSE ON CLOCK: 5:06

He goes through the security checkpoint and holds his card key up to the reader

SFX: BUZZER

Confused, Ebo holds his card up again.

SFX: BUZZER

The guard comes over, takes Ebo's card and sticks it into a machine to see what's what with it.

GUARD  
Card's frozen.

EBO  
It worked two minutes ago. Your reader must be broken.

The guard isn't gonna argue about his equipment. He hands the card back to Ebo.

GUARD  
Administration Building. They'll deal with it.

EBO  
I'm late for an pickup. I'll go there as soon as I get it. I promise.

The guard looks at Ebo blankly. Ebo knows he's not getting through. He exits back out the building.

**INT. RECRUITER'S HOUSE/OFFICES - CONTINUOUS**

Most of the boxes have been removed. The desks are gone, the walls are all painted now...

The Recruiter is in the middle of juggling 5 different things.

RECRUITER  
 (into cell)  
 ...No, I'm not sure about that...  
 Well, have it ready, just in  
 case... yeah... Hold on a sec.

Greg has crossed in to ask the Recruiter something...

GREG  
 Who packed the original compile  
 tapes? They were in the hallway.

RECRUITER  
 They're still there.

The Recruiter points to an open box on the hallway floor.

GREG  
 That box is empty.

The Recruiter thinks for a beat, then hangs up on the caller.

RECRUITER  
 Shit!

**EXT. CAMPUS LAWN - MOMENTS LATER**

Ebo paces, trying to figure out his how to get into the building. He looks at his watch...

CLOSE ON: WATCH 5:11

Ebo spots Chally on a run. He rushes over.

CHALLY  
 Where the hell'd you go! What's  
 going on?

EBO  
 It's too long to explain--

CHALLY  
 No! Explain! What did you mean,  
 you're leaving?

EBO  
 We don't have time--

CHALLY  
 Now!

EBO  
 My code's in the compile tonight.

Chally is suddenly more confused than mad.

CHALLY  
That's great!

EBO  
No, it's not. It's not in the  
chimp. They put it in other  
animals.

Now she's just confused.

CHALLY  
Well, I'm sure they know what  
they're doing--

EBO  
You don't understand. "They" didn't  
put it in. It was inserted..  
Illegally.

CHALLY  
By who?

EBO  
By... Bad people-- It doesn't  
matter who. They sneaked it into  
all the animals being compiled  
tonight!

Chally is taken aback.

CHALLY  
Wait. All the animals?

Ebo nods.

EBO  
All the animals tonight contain  
unsanctioned code written for the  
chimp.

Chally's eyes go wide.

CHALLY  
You gotta tell somebody! You gotta  
warn 'em.

EBO  
I can't. They'll put me in jail.

CHALLY

Ebo, your idea was stolen. They're not gonna put you in jail. You have to tell 'em--

EBO

It wasn't stolen.  
(admitting)  
I gave it to 'em.

CHALLY

(shocked)  
What?

EBO

I didn't know they were gonna do this. I swear! The agreement was only to sneak it into the chimp--

CHALLY

Agreement? You made a agreement with somebody-- Ebo, what have you done?

EBO

I can fix it. I know how but I can't get in the building. I need you to delivery these tapes for me.

Ebo tries to hand his messenger bag to her. She doesn't want to touch the bag.

CHALLY

You have tapes in there?

EBO

The originals. I need you to give 'em to Wilton. They have to be imported before the compile starts-- Where you going?

Chally is backing up.

CHALLY

I'm not gonna be a part of this.

EBO

Give me your card then. I need to get in--

CHALLY

They'll trace it back to me.

Chally keeps backing up.

EBO  
I'll say you weren't involved.  
We're running out of time--

CHALLY  
Stop saying "we". There is no we.  
(tearful)  
Why'd you do this, Ebo? Why!

She runs away.

EBO  
Chally! Wait!

Ebo considers running after her but there's no time.

**EXT. BACK OF A BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER**

Chally runs behind a building. She finds a private spot and starts to cry.

**EXT. COMPILE BUILDING - SIDE ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER**

Ebo is back to pacing. He's in the shadows of the building, trying to figure out a way past the new guards at this entrance.

3 EMPLOYEES come down the path towards the entrance and he gets an idea.

**INT. COMPILE BUILDING LOBBY - CONTINUOUS**

The group enters the building, CHATTING among themselves. They get into the security checkpoint line.

Ebo wanders in and joins the line behind them.

Ebo walks past the card reader, walking very close to the last person, trying to sneak through on their card.

SFX: BUZZER

EBO  
What the..?

Ebo pretends to look for his card in his pockets.

EBO (CONT'D)  
Damn. I left my key in the Runner's  
Room. You're not gonna make me go  
all the back, are you?

The guards give a unsympathetic look.

GUARD  
Wait here a second.

The guard goes to his station.

EBO  
I'll go get it.

Ebo heads back out the door as the guard picks up the phone.

GUARD  
Sir! One moment!

EBO  
It's okay. I'll go back.

Ebo is out the door.

A moment later, Ebo's picture comes up on the Guard's screen with the words "NO ENTRY - Report sightings". The guard picks up the phone and dials.

**EXT. COMPILE BUILDING ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER**

Ebo walks down the stone steps and looks at his watch.

CLOSE ON WATCH: 5:36

He hurries to the back of the building.

**EXT. BACK OF COMPILE BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER**

Ebo searches for an open window or unlocked door but he can't find any. Okay, Plan B then...

He finds a ROCK in the bushes and BREAKS one of the windows into a basement office. He quickly climbs through.

Just then the Recruiter comes around the corner. He spots Ebo's head right before it disappears into the window.

RECRUITER  
(into phone)  
Found him.

The Recruiter runs over to the broken window. He's about to go through himself when...

SFX: WALKIE TALKIE NOISE

No time to get through without being spotted. He grabs a loose branch, lays it in front of the broken window and ducks behind the bushes just as...

2 SECURITY GUARDS making their rounds come around the corner.

VOICE (O.S.)  
(over walkie-talkie)  
Security Patrols. Be on lookout for  
Ebo Tuck. Male, 20s. Breach  
attempt.

SECURITY GUARD 1  
First I drain the Johnson.

The guard walks to the bushes not far from where the Recruiter is hiding.

SECURITY GUARD 1 (CONT'D)  
Come here. Hold my flashlight.

SECURITY GUARD 2  
So you can turn around and pee on  
me? Nice try.

SECURITY GUARD 1  
C'mon, man. It's big. I need two  
hands for guide this thing out.

The second guard isn't coming over so the first guard drops his flashlight to the ground next to him, undoes his fly and starts to pee.

**INT. COMPILER FLOOR SIDE HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER**

Ebo opens the door to the office he's in and peeks out. The coast seems clear.

He exits into the hallway with the messenger bag of tapes on his shoulder.

Ebo hears a PERSON approaching and slows to a walk, controlling his breathing -- he's just a normal runner on a normal run. The person comes around the corner and passes. Ebo quickens his pace again.

Ebo comes to a INTERSECTION that meets the main hallway leading to the Compile Room. Ebo peeks around the corner -- at the end of the hallway he can see the Compile Room's security checkpoint and the COUNTDOWN CLOCK above it...

CLOSE ON CLOCK: "Next Compile: 0 days 0 hrs 11 mins"

Ebo leans back out of the intersection so if the guard looks down the hallway, he'll be out of the guard's line of sight.

A WOMAN passes by in the hallway.

EBO  
Excuse me. Are you going in the  
Compile Room?

She shakes her head without slowing down.

A TALL GUY walks by at double speed...

EBO (CONT'D)  
Can you do me a favor--

TALL GUY  
In a hurry. Sorry.

Then suddenly 2 COMPILING TECHNICIANS come out of the break room and walk towards Ebo. Wilton is one of them! The gods are looking after Ebo!

EBO  
Wilton! I was hoping I'd run into  
you. I have your money.

Ebo signals him with his eyes to play along.

TECHNICIAN  
(to Wilton)  
I'll see you inside.

The other tech continues to the security checkpoint.

Wilton looks at Ebo -- what's this about?

EBO  
(sotto)  
I have tapes in this bag. I need  
you to bring 'em in and import 'em  
before the compile--

WILTON  
What are talking about?

EBO  
I don't have my key card. These  
tapes need to be imported within  
the next few minutes--

WILTON  
I think you have the wrong person.

Wilton turns to leave but Ebo grabs his arm.

EBO  
I was instructed to bring all my  
tapes to you. Only you. I know you  
work for him. For them.

WILTON  
I really don't know what you're  
talking about.

Wilton tries to pull his arm away but Ebo holds him.

EBO  
No! Look at me. Look at me! These  
tapes need to be imported. Now. I  
know you work for him.

Wilton finally pulls his arm away. Wilton's eyes show that  
Ebo was right.

WILTON  
(anger whisper)  
It's your job to bring illegal  
tapes through the checkpoint. Not  
mine. You risk exposing me by  
breaking protocol again, I'll have  
you killed.

Wilton rushes to catch up with his buddy.

Ebo sneaks a look around the corner.

CLOSE ON CLOCK: "Next Compile: 0 days 0 hrs 9 mins"

Panic sets in. Think of something, think of something...

Ebo begrudgingly realizes he has only one option left.

He takes a deep breathe and walks into the intersection.

EBO  
(calling out)  
Stop the compile--

Suddenly he's PULLED BACK, out of the intersection.

ANGLE ON CHECKPOINT GUARD

The guard looks up but doesn't see anybody in the hallway.  
Must be hearing things.

BACK

REVEAL the Recruiter. He was the one who pulled Ebo back.

RECRUITER  
What are you doing!

EBO  
I'm stopping this.  
(calling out)  
STOP THE COM--

The Recruiter puts his hand over Ebo's mouth and forcibly throws him THROUGH A DOOR into the stairwell.

**INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS**

Ebo falls to the ground.

RECRUITER  
Those tapes might have fingerprints on 'em. You'd implicate all of us.

EBO  
I don't care.

Ebo starts to get up. The Recruiter takes out a KNIFE.

RECRUITER  
I'm not gonna let you sabotage all our work. Listen to me -- it doesn't have to go this way. Let's go back to the plan. I'll write this off and we'll forget it happened. C'mon, let's erase the evidence and get out of here.

Ebo is cornered by the knife and he has no better plan. He comes to his senses and reluctantly nods. He holds out the bag for the Recruiter to take.

RECRUITER (CONT'D)  
Smart.

The Recruiter takes out a demagnetizer with the hand not holding the knife but...

Ebo LUNGES FORWARD, blocking the knife with the bag. This throws the Recruiter off-balance and Ebo runs in the only safe direction -- down the stairs.

**INT. BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER**

The basement is filled with scaffolds and ladders wrapped around all the equipment needed to run a large building -- boilers, air conditioning units, plumbing pipes...

The machinery is LOUD.

Ebo bursts out of the stairwell and runs between some boiler-related equipment, scanning the room for another stairwell to get back upstairs.

The Requirer emerges out of the stairwell a few seconds later. He doesn't see where Ebo went.

**EXT. BACK OF COMPILE BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER**

The guards have returned to the spot of the pee break.

SECURITY GUARD 1  
There it is. I knew I left it here.

The guard picks up his flashlight and then sees the broken window, no longer hidden by the branch.

SECURITY GUARD 1 (CONT'D)  
(into walkie-talkie)  
We have a breach. Rear of Compile Building.

**INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS**

SECURITY LIGHTS start FLASHING.

SPEAKER (O.S.)  
Security breach. May I have your attention. We have a security breach.

RECRUITER  
(calling out)  
I'm not the only one looking for you, Ebo. They wanna put you in jail, I wanna keep you out. It's an easy choice.

Ebo looks at his watch...

CLOSE ON WATCH: 5:56

Ebo spots what looks like another stairwell on a landing nearby. He makes a run for the short ladder that leads up to the landing.

The Recruiter spots Ebo and rushes after him.

Ebo climbs the short ladder to the landing. There's a window in the door -- the door DOES lead to a stairwell!

But the door is locked.

Ebo frantically giggles the handle. It's no use.

EBO  
(yelling)  
STOP THE COMPILE!

RECRUITER  
They can't hear you.

The Recruiter is now on the landing, blocking Ebo's escape. He still has his knife so Ebo is trapped.

EBO  
(panicking)  
Please, we have to stop this. It'll  
be the dinosaurs all over again.  
It's too much!

RECRUITER  
Things have a way of working out.

EBO  
We're gonna cause cancer across an  
entire phylum!

RECRUITER  
That's how the game is played.

EBO  
Cancer's not a game!

RECRUITER  
No? Bad cells try to change the  
status quo and good cells try to  
stop 'em. That's not a game?

EBO  
It's too much at once. Species are  
gonna die!

RECRUITER

Some. Sure. But the the surviving ones will end up stronger. They always do. Every time.

Ebo starts shaking his head. This goes against everything he's ever been taught. He can't process it.

EBO

We have to prevent cancer. Our job is to prevent cancer...

RECRUITER

That's THEIR job. Ours is to cause it. We ARE cancer, Ebo. Don't you see? We're the bad cells. You and I.

EBO

I'm not like you.

RECRUITER

Your whole life you've been trying to force change into the system. Just like me. You and I are the same, Ebo. We're both "bad" cells. You just haven't accepted it yet.

SFX: The ALARM on Ebo's watch goes off.

CLOSE ON WATCH: 6:00

RECRUITER (CONT'D)

The compiles have started. Too late to sneak the originals back in.

It's over. And Ebo knows it.

RECRUITER (CONT'D)

Now the choice is get arrested with the evidence or escape to safety?

The Recruiter holds out his hand for Ebo's messenger bag and this time Ebo offers no resistance -- he lets him have it.

The Recruiter quickly erases the tapes with the demagnetizer.

RECRUITER (CONT'D)

Let's get out of here.

The Requirer heads down the ladder to the floor level and Ebo dutifully follows. Unlike the Recruiter, Ebo has no sense of urgency.

The flashing lights are still going off as the Recruiter walks back towards the stairwell, Ebo, almost zombie-like, trailing behind.

RECRUITER (CONT'D)

I know what you're feeling. Takes time of fully accept who you really are. They call us bad but we're not really. Think of it as being an agent of change.

Ebo has decided he's gone as far he's gonna go. He drops to his knees in front of a large equipment panel and starts to cry.

EBO

I'm not going.

RECRUITER

You have to. We talked about this--

EBO

Not without her.

RECRUITER

Ebo, listen to me. We don't have time for this.

Ebo starts is now crying uncontrollably.

RECRUITER (CONT'D)

Get up!

EBO

I don't want to live without her!!

RECRUITER

You have to!!

CHALLY (O.S.)

I'll go.

REVEAL: Chally standing just outside the stairwell.

Ebo looks up. Is she really there or this a dream?

CHALLY

I don't want to live without you either.

Ebo's tears of sorrow turn to tears of joy.

Ebo rubs his eyes and looks away. It's a test -- if he looks back and she's still there he'll know it's not a dream.

He looks back. Chally is still there! Chally is crying too.

CHALLY (CONT'D)  
I love you.

Ebo is now looking directly into Chally's eyes.

EBO  
Really? Why?

It's such an Ebo moment - she proclaims her love and he's STILL insecure.

CHALLY  
(fake annoyance)  
Okay, let's start over...

Ebo smiles. That's exactly what he wanted -- to experience the way she can playfully disarm his insecurities.

But that phrase strikes him.

Ebo is overtaken by the realization that he's heard that phrase before. By somebody other than Chally. But where? By whom? He can't place it...

EBO  
(to himself)  
Start over... start over...

He suddenly realizes where...

FLASHBACK TO:

**INT. COMPILER ROOM (WEEKS AGO)**

MARCO  
...What do you care why? The tape's dead. We have to start over...

BACK TO PRESENT

That's it! The game might not be over. He quickly looks around and, sure enough, spots a LARGE EQUIPMENT PANEL. Energized, he rushes over.

RECRUITER  
Where you going?

EBO  
When you attach jumper cables to the balls of Evolution, you need a power source.

REVEAL: A label on the panel says "MAIN POWER". The Recruiter realizes what Ebo is doing.

RECRUITER

No! Don't sabotage the compile!  
This is not who you are.

EBO

A bad cell? Yeah, well there's  
something your little cancer  
analogy doesn't take into account.

Ebo looks over to Chally.

EBO (CONT'D)

The role of hormones.

Chally and Ebo are looking directly into each other's eyes.

EBO (CONT'D)

They enable cells to change.

Ebo pulls his reaches up and grabs the biggest LEVER on the panel...

RECRUITER

Don't!!

..and pulls it down.

ALL THE LIGHTS GO OFF.

**INT. COMPILE ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Chaos erupts.

ALARMS SOUND

Rows of lights on complicated equipment CASCADE OFF.

Compiling stations fail.

Screens display "No Connection" then shut off themselves.

TECHNIANS

What's happening! / We've lost  
power!

Technicians, watching weeks of work erased in front of their eyes, pull out tapes and throw them to the ground in frustration.

**INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS**

The Recruiter rushes over to the lever and pulls it back up.

But it's too late.

Ebo puts his hand on the Recruiter's shoulder...

EBO

It's done.

The Recruiter lowers his head in defeat.

FADE TO:

**EXT. LAWN OUTSIDE COMPILE BUILDING - LATER**

EMERGENCY VEHICLES are parked all over the lawn. MAINTENANCE PERSONAL make their way into the building to figure out what went wrong.

Chally and Ebo come down the steps and blend in with the hundreds of evacuated EMPLOYEES already on the lawn. No one knows they had anything to do with this.

They walk away from the building.

CHALLY

Glad that worked out. Packing everything I'd need for the rest of my life in a half hour would've be hard.

EBO

Preaching to the choir. Think a guy with one glass owns luggage?

(then)

Why'd you come back?

We slowly PULL BACK.

CHALLY

'Cause you did illegal stuff.

Beat.

EBO

This is one of those you have to walk me through, isn't it?

CHALLY

(explaining)

What you did was really screwed up. Now there's no hurry for me to make myself better. You made my future less stressful. What girl wouldn't want that?

(then)

Your turn.

EBO

Why you? Because you're pretty. Runners don't get girls like you that often.

Continue to PULL BACK. Ebo and Chally join hands and continue to walk into the distance.

CHALLY

(sing-song)

You think I'm pretty. You think I'm pretty...

The camera takes flight...

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Did you know that in the game of Craps betting the "Don't Pass" line pays off just as often as the "Pass" line?

We recognize the narrator's voice now -- it's the Recruiter.

RECRUITER (V.O.)

My job is to find bad cells and get 'em to bet against the house.

We are now FLYING OVER and AWAY from the campus.

RECRUITER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And just like in Craps, sometimes my bets pay off, sometimes I lose.

We see the entire town and the forests beyond.

RECRUITER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I'm not naive. There's always the chance the game might be rigged and the bad cells' wins and losses are predetermined -- that we're actually PART of the plan.

Nothing but forest now, as far as the eye can see.

RECRUITER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Who knows? All we can do is be true  
to our nature and have faith. In  
the long run, things have a way of  
sorting themselves out.

A Peregrine Falcon flies across the screen.

FADE TO BLACK

IN WHITE LETTERS:

"The Peregrine Falcon became the fastest  
animal in all of evolution."

DISSOLVE INTO:

"The Neanderthal was eventually introduced.

Future revisions went on to become  
Evolution's flagship species."

ADD:

"They live 20 to 30 years longer than the other Great Apes."

FADE OUT.